

# A L B I N A,

Countess *RAIMOND*;

A

## T R A G E D Y,

By MRS. COWLEY;

As it is Performed at the

*Gond. be.  
Mt. Wado*

T H E A T R E - R O Y A L

I N T H E

H A Y - M A R K E T.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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M,DCC,LXXIX.



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TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
LORD HARROWBY.

MY LORD,

ALBINA had the honour of being known to your Lordship, almost from her infancy. Her faults, and her graces, you are already acquainted with, as she grew up in some measure beneath your Lordship's eye. She is now arrived at maturity; and if in her present state, my Lord, you should find her more polished, than when she had last the honour of your attention, it is chiefly owing to the hints with which you then favoured me.

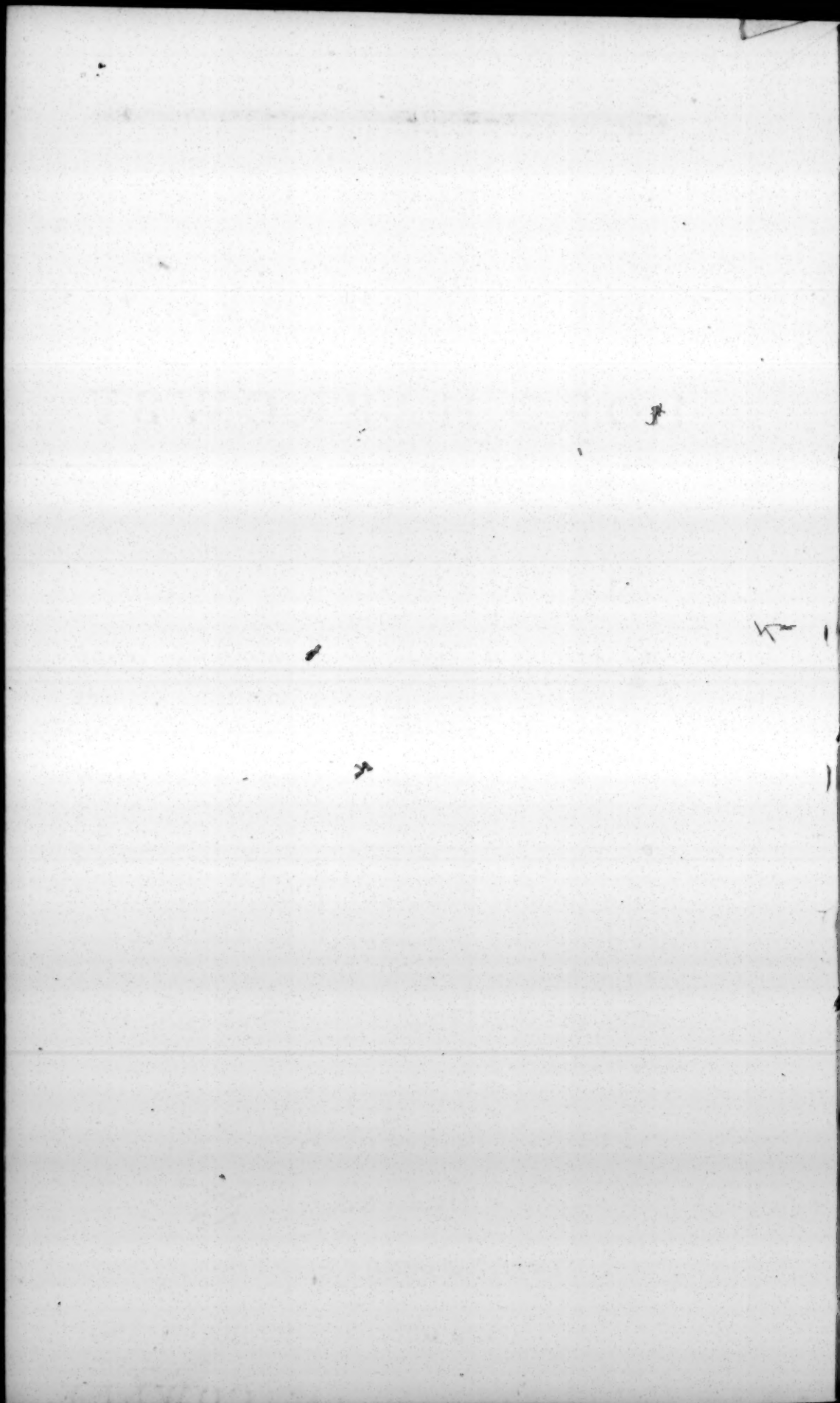
I have the honour to be,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's grateful,

And obedient humble Servant,

H. COWLEY.



# P R E F A C E.

THE very favourable reception with which the Pieces I have presented to the Stage, have been honoured by the Public, has given them the appearance of great success; and it is probable that those who were witnesses of their reception, will be surprised to find this Tragedy prefaced by complaints of hardship and injury, and to know that it has been productive of a train of mortifications and disappointments to its Author.

It is with the utmost reluctance that I feel myself compelled to enter into the disagreeable circumstances which preceded the representation. This is however necessary, as I now present to the world a Play, which I presume to call *original*, though I know that the principal circumstances of the plot, and the leading traits of character, have appeared in other Plays, previous to the representation of this.

The idea of writing for the Stage struck me by accident, and the *Runaway* was my first literary attempt. I am as ready, as the severest Critic can wish, to admit that it has all the crudeness of a first attempt. It succeeded however, on the Stage, and in its sale, far beyond my most sanguine expectations; and during its run, which was stopped by the Benefits, was one of the most profitable Plays, both to the Author and Manager, that appears on the records of the *Treasury-books* at either House.—A success so encouraging, opened a new prospect of advantage to my Family, which I have since pursued with alacrity; but this success closed with the unfortunate period in which Mr. *Garrick* resigned the management of Drury-Lane.

When Mr. *Sheridan* obtained a share of the Patent, I flattered myself that I had some right to his attention, as Author of the last piece which was produced by his able Predecessor; but the first Winter in which he commenced the management, my Comedy, to use the technical term, was *shelved*. The vanity of a young Author was piqued; and I wrote to Mr. *Sheridan*, in the civilest terms I could, to remonstrate on the occasion; but of my letter not the least notice was taken. As I was not then informed of Mr. *Sheridan's* general neglect of letters, I considered this slight as a particular insult to me, especially as the Comedy was not played again that year, but by command of their Majesties, and for the benefit of Performers. I therefore felt myself under a necessity

necessity of presenting *Albina* at Covent-Garden; but, as I had some reason to dread Mr. *Harris's* opinions,\* it was presented to him, in the Summer of 1777, by a Lady of Rank, with the name and sex of the Author concealed. After several weeks of anxious expectation, it was returned, with a peremptory rejection. I then waited on him, and avowed the unfortunate Piece, but had little reason to flatter myself with the circumstances of my reception: Mr. *Harris* told me, that there was no hope from alteration; that the Play was unfit for the Stage, and that he was convinced it never could be made fit: he disliked the whole idea of *Gondibert's* situation; and thought the Fifth Act totally inadmissible, particularly the design of *Gondibert* to destroy *Albina*, which he pronounced to be so unnatural, that no audience would bear it.† The last part of this opinion surprised me, as I had conceived the Fifth Act to be the principal strength of the Piece; but I was compelled to submit: Nor is its rejection the injury of which I complain; had the ashes of my Tragedy rested undisturbed, I might have mourned over them; but I would have mourned in silence.

The Tragedy of *Percy* was soon after announced. I attended its representation with anxious curiosity, as the Play approved by that judgement which had decided so severely on mine. At the opening of the Piece, I was much concerned to see an old English story attempted, though it bore little resemblance to the legendary tales of *Percy* and *Douglas*; and that so much was said of Chivalry, and of expeditions to the Holy Land—circumstances, which, though finely calculated for the Stage, had been much neglected by our Poets, in favour of the tales of Greek and Roman antiquity. Yet, as the Crusades are common historical facts, I could only consider my being in some measure anticipated, as unfortunate. But I can hardly describe my astonishment, or distress, when I saw *Raby*, the Father of the Heroine, appear in almost the same situation with *Westmoreland*; and

\* From those which he entertained of the *Runaway*, and of a Musical Piece, founded on a popular story, which has since been given in a Comic Opera, by Mr. *Diddin*.

† The manner in which the Play, and particularly the Fifth Act, has been received by repeated Audiences, gives me a right to say, that Mr. *Harris* was mistaken in his ideas of the impression which it would make. His opinion, that *Gondibert's* design to kill *Albina* was unnatural, has been fully answered by a well-known subsequent event. My design was, to delineate the effects of love, without hope, in a man governed by the most violent passions, though in the habits of virtue. Pursuing a train of probable events, and feeling the emotions of the human heart, under certain modifications of character, the incident of the Fifth Act arose irresistibly. I can scarcely say that I invented it, the image seemed in a moment so strongly impressed on my mind. The event, as it is here given, was at that time perfectly new:—that it was founded in Truth and Nature, I appeal to the conduct of the unfortunate Clergyman, who felt it possible to love, and to destroy.

and resent his Son-in-law's imputation on the honour of his Daughter, in a train of ideas exactly similar to those which I had given to the Father of *Albina*; and that he even spoke several lines nearly verbatim; which will be found on comparing the two Tragedies.

I learnt from the Papers of next day, that *Percy* was a Translation from a Tragedy called *Gabrielle de Vergy*, written by *M. Belley*. I was soon after informed, by persons who had read the original, (for I am unacquainted with the language) that in *M. Belley's* Tragedy there is *no Father*. I had remarked, indeed, during the representation, that *Raby* seemed to have no connection with the plot; he was out of the way during all the business of the Play, and returned just time enough to challenge the defamer of his Daughter, and to call himself her *Champion*; which however neither introduces, nor retards a single event.

Various were my conjectures on this occasion; but prudence suggested a cautious silence, as I had still hopes that my Tragedy might be accepted at Drury-Lane. I accordingly endeavoured to forget the slights I had received, and waited on Mr. *Sheridan*, who received me infinitely better than I expected. He regretted that I had not brought my Piece before, as Mr. *Jephson* and Mr. *Craddock* had each a Tragedy promised for the next Winter, (1778-9) which must put it off another Season; but assured me in the most explicit terms, that no other should come before it, provided it was proper for the Stage; which, he added in a very polite manner, he had no doubt of. He soon after received my Farce of *Who's the Dupe?* with equal frankness, and promised that it should be brought out in the best part of the Season, as some recompence for the delay of my Tragedy. More than satisfied, happy with my prospects, I had only to regret that I had misapprehended his neglect of my letter, and caused myself so many uneasy hours.

The *Law of Lombardy* was soon after put into Rehearsal, and I learnt, with great surprise, that it bore a resemblance to *Albino* in the conduct of the Piece, though not in the Story or Characters. I was greatly alarmed at the idea of more anticipation; which, whether accidental or otherwise, was destructive of every prospect of reputation or advantage to me. This resemblance was mentioned to Mr. *Sheridan*;<sup>\*</sup> and I thought myself happy when, by his interposition, Mr. *Harris* was prevailed on to read the

<sup>\*</sup> This resemblance afterwards appeared to be less than I apprehended; as it is in no part of the real plot of the Play, but in the design formed by the characters to impeach, without any real ground, the virtue of the Heroine; which can only be done, either on the stage, or in real life, by creating false appearances, or by giving a false colour to the most innocent actions. The story of *Genzara* in the *Orlando Furioso*, of *Aristo*, which I have read since the *Law of Lombardy* appeared, bears no kind of resemblance, in the general conduct, characters, or events, to *Much ado about Nothing*, except in this point; and *Albina* is equally different from both, in every other part of the Play.

the Tragedy, on the suggestion that some alteration had been made; and they acknowledged, that, if both Pieces were entitled to the Stage, the only means of doing justice to both, was to bring them out, at the same time, at different Houses; otherwise the novelty of one of them must be destroyed—and the idea of Rival Tragedies might be as advantageous as that of Rival Actors had been on some particular occasions. This matter, of very anxious expectation, was suspended near a month, as Mr. *Sheridan* met with great difficulty in finding the Copy of the Tragedy. In the mean-time, the speaking Pantomime of the *Touchstone* was brought out; and, being then in great good-humour with Mr. *Harris*, I had a pleasure in endeavouring to suggest some useful alterations, and was happy when he accepted the new scene of *Lady Fashion's Rout*, which I considered as an earnest that he intended to bring out the Tragedy. Mr. *Sheridan* at length found *Albina*, and I attended him by appointment. On this occasion I waited three hours, (which was rather longer than he had ever made me wait before): he came at length with the Tragedy in his hand; and I feel myself too much flattered by what he then said, to omit it; whatever length it may add to my tale.

He made a thousand apologies, (and in apologies for negligence Mr. *Sheridan* is remarkably easy and successful) but observed he had brought the *best* in his hand, saying, “I have now read every word of your Tragedy. I was determined not to see you ’till I had; and this it is that has kept me so long. Before I enter into particulars, I will tell you that I think it a very good one; it will do you much honour, and be of service to the Theatre.” On my acknowledgements, he added, “Upon my word, I really think what I say; and, without a compliment, I am surprised that such a Piece could have been refused. Mr. *Harris* must have seen it when his head was full of other business: if he had read it attentively, he could not have refused it. This Tragedy has a right to the Stage: it must and *shall* be done.”

The Play was then opened, and Mr. *Sheridan* shewed me several indentings against lines which he wished me to consider. He said the Characters were very strongly drawn, and the Story interesting; and frequently pointed out passages, which, on account of the Poetry, or the Thought, he was pleased to admire. The only objection of importance was, that he thought *Gondibert* should not see, or mention, the Bridal Bed, in the last Scene: but, on my attempting a timorous defence, he added, “Don’t alter this, or any other passage, unless it strikes you as it does me; you ought to be tenacious: every original Writer must give up passages with difficulty: it is only Translators, and Borrowers, who are so ready to comply with every hint that is proposed.”

The judgement pronounced by Mr. *Sheridan* made me particularly happy, as Mr. *Harris* had promised, the same morning,  
 “that

that he would be guided by Mr. *Sheridan's* opinion, who said he would give the *Tragedy* to Mr. *Harris* himself, and tell him what he thought of it. This was adding favour to favour; and my thanks, I believe, sufficiently expressed my sentiments.

Mr. *Harris*, a few days afterwards, took my *Tragedy*, as he imagined, into the country; but, on opening it, found that Mr. *Sheridan* had, by mistake, given him a *Comedy*. This occasioned another week's suspense: it was then however obtained and read; and I had scarce a doubt, considering every circumstance, that it would be put into immediate Rehearsal.

All my hopes were however confounded by Mr. *Harris's* persevering with inflexible steadiness in his former opinion. He said, there had been no material alterations, (which was certainly true, the Play now printed being still the same) and that it was still his opinion, that the *Tragedy* could never be made fit for the Stage. When he was reminded that Mr. *Sheridan* entertained a very different opinion of it, he replied, "I don't believe he has read it: he may have dipped into it; but I am convinced he has not read it through." This was afterwards discussed in the presence of both, when Mr. *Sheridan* assured Mr. *Harris* that he had read the whole, and that it was his opinion it ought to be done; but Mr. *Harris* remained inflexible.

When I next saw Mr. *Sheridan*, it was on the subject of my Farce. He observed me dispirited, and kindly taking my hand, said, "Never mind 'em; you and I will shew that *we know* " a good *Tragedy*."

This Farce Mr. *Harris* had offered to take; but, as I had then no doubt of its being played in an advantageous part of the season at Drury-Lane, I had no inducement to change the House for which it was intended. *Who's the Dupe*, however, in consequence of repeated breaches of appointments and promises, was not produced till the middle of the Benefits, when it could not have a regular run; and I was then to pay an Hundred Guineas (Thirty of which had been added by the present Managers) for the chance of a Benefit, at a time when the current business of the Theatre would not produce that Sum.

The pecuniary disappointment I did not consider as material in this instance, as I hoped that the applause with which the Farce was uniformly received, would have put an end to the difficulty of getting my Pieces on the Stage, which was infinitely more harrassing to my mind than the labour of producing them. I was however soon after greatly hurt, to hear that Mr. *Sheridan* evaded the subject when it was accidentally mentioned, and advised me to write a *Comedy*.—It was necessary, for this purpose, that I should have some Comic ideas; and *they* were all completely driven from my mind, by the vexations I had undergone. I had indeed made some progress in writing a Piece founded

on Turkish manners, the Scene of which is laid in Asia, and flattered myself with success from the novelty of the attempt; but it lies, and must lie, in its present state, till I have reason to believe it will meet with a candid reception from the Theatres.

Mr. *Craddock's* Tragedy was then preparing for rehearsal, and the parts given out; but another Play of Miss *More's* (*Fatal Falsehood*) was discovered to be nearly completed; and Mr. *Harris* was so eager to bring it out, though it was then near the conclusion of the season, that she has said, he would hardly give her time to finish it. There was only one capital Actress who would undertake a new part in May; and, though she belonged to Drury-Lane, she was cast in Miss *More's* Play at Covent-Garden, in consequence of the levelling power of *the Coalition*; and Mr. *Craddock's* Play was put off 'till next season.

Another Play by Miss *More* alarmed me greatly. The terror of suffering again what I had felt at *Percy*, induced me to write to her in much agitation; and I am sorry that I was prevented from sending that Letter, and induced to believe it was impossible that the same palpable resemblance could again happen. Under this conviction I attended the representation, and heard with astonishment, what appeared to be every essential circumstance both in the Plot, and Characters, of my Play; and to observe, that it was changed principally in those places which had been objected to in mine. In *Orlando*, as in *Gondibert*, the action springs from Love, which had taken its rise in a situation wherein Hope was impossible: the object is indeed changed from the Widow of a Brother, to the betrothed Mistress of a Friend.

The character and offices of *Edithe* are given, though the sex is changed. From the same motive of aggrandizing his fortune, though without the same stimulus of a degraded situation, *Bertrand* worms himself into the confidence of the despairing Lover, and persuades him that he is secretly beloved by *Isabella*, whilst she receives the addresses of another. *Orlando* breaks into a rhapsody similar to that of *Gondibert*, persuades himself he had seen many proofs of that concealed passion, and gives himself up to the guidance of his artful Counsellor; which produces a catastrophe that is nearly the same. *Orlando*, in the dark, intending to stab *Rivers*, by a fortunate mistake stabs *Bertrand*; and the principal situation is produced exactly in the same manner in both Plays; which is, by the critical entrance of the person supposed to be murdered. The greater part of this, however, passes behind the scenes in *Fatal Falsehood*; by which the dramatic effect is weakened; but the chief objections made to mine, are removed. The character of the Sister of *Rivers*, and other parts of the Play, differ from mine; but there is a scene between the Father and his Daughter, on her being rejected by *Orlando*, that bears the same resemblance, in the literal expression,

to the scene between *Westmoreland* and *Albina*, in the fourth Act of this Play, as the scene in *Percy* did to that between him and *Edward*.

How all these wonderful resemblances happened, it is impossible for me to know—nor do I know that Miss *More* ever saw my Tragedy—it was in Mr. *Garrick's* possession (under the name of *Edwina*) soon after the conclusion of the season in which he left the Stage; about which time, I have since been informed, Miss *More* was a Visitant at Hampton, and that the Play, afterwards called *Percy*, was then translating. It was afterwards in Mr. *Harris's* Closet, at the same time with *Percy*, and again nearly at the same time with *Fatal Falsehood*. I know that Managers are continually employed in giving advice, and in suggesting alterations to Authors; and I have frequently heard, before I had any experience in this anxious warfare, of the danger, when once an idea is afloat in the Theatrical Hemisphere, of its getting into other plays. Amidst the croud of Plots, and Stage Contrivances, in which a Manager is involv'd, recollection is too frequently mistaken for the suggestions of imagination.

Should it, after all, appear to the Public, that there is nothing more in these repeated resemblances, than what may be accounted for by supposing a similarity in our minds; and that, by some wonderful coincidence, Miss *More* and I have but one common stock of ideas between us, I have only to lament that the whole misfortune of this similarity has fallen upon me. Now, as in this case, we must continue writing in the same track, it seems reasonable that we should have our productions brought forward in turn; instead of which Miss *More* has had *two* Tragedies brought out, both of which were written since mine, whilst I struggled for the representation of *one*, in vain. But, as there seems to be little hope of my obtaining this, or any other favour, from the Winter Managers, I presume at least, that, as I do not pretend to prove—what it is impossible for me to know—that Miss *More* ever read, or copied me, it will be admitted that I have not copied her; had I not been able to ascertain the fact, that *Albina* was written long before *Percy* and *Fatal Falsehood* appeared, no proof would have been required, beyond their extreme similarity, that I had been guilty of the grossest Plagiarism.

I now found myself deprived of all hope of *Albina's* appearing to the Public as an Original Play; yet I still conceived myself sure of its being represented at Drury-Lane the next Season: but I soon after accidentally learnt, that Mr. *Sheridan* had promised another Tragedy; and, as Mr. *Cradock's* had been put off, I well knew that three would not be done:—this, with his erasing the subject, and saying that he thought Mr. *Harris* would still receive it, reduced me to the disagreeable necessity of asking an explicit

declaration,

declaration, when I heard with inexpressible astonishment—"That he never intended to bring out the Play at Drury-Lane, and that the next Season was engaged to Mr. Craddock, and another Gentleman." On being reminded of his promises and encomiums, he said—"It was still his opinion, that the Tragedy was a very good one, that it ought not to have been refused, and that he had purposed to prevail on Mr. Harris after all to bring it out; but, as this had been improperly mentioned to Mr. Harris, there was now an end of it."

This most injurious conduct appears to me to be the effect of that coalition of the Theatres, which, by uniting the interests and prejudices of the Managers, deprives an Author of all hope, after a Piece has been rejected by one of them. Had Mr. Sheridan been unconnected with Covent-Garden, I have no doubt, from the opinion he conceived of my Tragedy, but that it would have been brought out in a most advantageous manner. Ideas of rivalry, which are the natural and proper effect of two Houses, would have been as favourable to me, as their union has been ruinous.

The morning succeeding my interview with Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Colman was asked to bring out a Tragedy of mine, at the Haymarket, which both the Winter Managers had refused. His answer was—*When an Author of reputation thinks proper to bring me a Piece, I don't think I have a right to deliberate. If Mrs. Cowley invites the Town to a Tragedy at the Haymarket, I am only the Midwife, to give it a safe delivery to the World; when one does not know a Writer, it is different.*

This candid and liberal answer I have great pleasure in recording. *Albina*, when read, drew an approbation not less warm from Mr. Colman, than from Mr. Sheridan: and it was not merely praise; Mr. Colman put it into immediate rehearsal. For this I think myself under the highest obligation, as Tragedy is hardly consistent with the sportive Genius of the Haymarket; and there was little hope of advantage equal to the expensive preparation of a regular Tragedy. It was however presented, with no other alteration than the curtailments,\* which were necessary, on account of the length, where the time of representation is shorter than in the Winter Theatres—and with the disadvantage of having one of its principal Characters performed in a style which excited laughter; yet *Albina* was received with a degree of applause, for which I should be ungrateful, were I not vain of it.

Had I taken up my pen merely in pursuit of applause, I should have been completely gratified; but this, though so ostentatiously held out as the motive for productions in the Poetic line, has seldom, in any age or country, produced works of considerable

\* These, in printing, are restored.

able reputation. Dramatic Writers, in particular, have always sought support from their labour, which is too great to be pursued for amusement. This may appear a vulgar topic; but to me it is a very serious subject of complaint, that, by the conduct of the Winter Managers, I have been deprived of a reasonable prospect of several hundred pounds, and have spent *years* of fruitless anxiety and trouble. The hazard of pleasing the Public is great; and the Writer who fails to do this, must submit without complaint: But mine is a peculiar fate; my productions have been uniformly received by the Public with distinguished approbation; yet I find the doors of the Winter Theatres shut against me.—To this severe decree I most reluctantly submit.



# PROLOGUE.\*

[*Prompter, speaking without.*]

PRAY, Sir, come back—come back—The Author  
 fwears,  
 That, if you speak——

Hang Authors, and their airs!

I say I *will* speak, though she burst with rage:  
 What right has She upon our *Summer Stage*?—  
 —With dismal Stories, and long Acts in verse,  
 Solemn, and slow-paced, as a midnight herse?  
 Bid her march off—troop back again to Drury—  
 There! there's a look! Defend me from the Fury.

Hey-dey! from floor to roof, display'd in rows,  
 As though we shiver'd in December snows!

'Tis dev'lish odd!—Beneath a burning sky  
 Who'd crowd it here, to pant, and sob, and cry,  
 Whilst Madmen swagger, or their Madams die? }

'Twas my advice to keep these Doors close shut  
 Against that ranting, bloody-minded Slut,

*Melpomenc.* I never yet could see

Those charms of hers—I'm sure she's none for me.

My Mistress—little *Thal*—you know I mean,

The laughing Princess of the Comic Scene—

—She sent me here, and dubb'd me Plenipo.

“ Dear PARSONS! Quick!” she cry'd, “this instant go!

“ Fly to yon Audience, who in judgement sit,

“ And plead our cause before the Jury Pit.

“ Tell 'em this Authorling abjures *my* reign,

“ To fill my haughty Sister's sanguine train;

“ A lawless Rebel, from my Banner flown—

“ —I call for justice—justice from the Town!”

I'll do't, said I; and then, in aid of you,

*My* wrongs I'll usher to their *Worships'* view.

*Me* she forsakes; her little *Daily* flights,

He who hath toil'd so many weary nights,

And talk'd of Algebra, and Greek, and Latin,

Till *larned Scholars* could no word squeeze pat-in.

Down with her Tragedy! down, down, ye Wits!

For me, and *Thal*. the fickle Baggage quits.

Spoil

\* The first part of this Prologue, which was intended for Mr.  
*Parsons*, was not spoken on the Stage.

## P R O L O G U E.

Spoil her Heroics! her new buskins doff!  
And then——

Monster! [Enter Mrs. Maffey.

You there! oh, oh, I'm off, I'm off!

[Exit.

Not write in Tragic stile!—Pray tell me why?

Sure those who made you laugh, *may* make you cry.

WHEN the *light* Scenes, our Author's pencil drew,  
Extorted—all she ask'd—a smile from You;  
Her grateful mind a new-born ardor caught,  
A loftier fancy, and sublimer thought:  
To her rapt eye the Martial Ages rose;  
And, as her Muse impell'd, her Story flows.  
'Tis true, she calls you from the tempting shade,  
The zephyr'd meadow, and the leafy glade;  
And not to cheer with Satire's poignant hit,  
Ironical Humour, or the flash of Wit.  
Her wand she waves; and, instant to your eyes  
Tempestuous passions, guilty deeds, arise!  
For these our Author's magic line was drawn;  
For these she bids you from the fragrant lawn:—  
To rend with fear, to melt with tender woe,  
And bid the graceful drops of pity flow.  
Majestic *Nature's* plan she follows there,  
Who, when thick vapours clog the sultry air,  
When glowing Sirius, from his fervid eye,  
Sends noxious languors through the sick'ning sky,  
Arous'd—amidst her THUNDERS she appears,  
And in terrific grandeur strikes our ears!  
The wide-stretch'd concave blackens with her ire;  
Through lab'ring æther darts the living fire;  
The heav'ns, the earth, all aid her mighty rage,  
And elements with wrathful elements engage!  
Then—whilst the trembling world is lost in fears—  
She melts the lurid clouds in healthful tears.

*Your* tears we mean to prompt, whilst You, secure  
Amidst the coming storm, the wreck endure:  
Harmless *our* tempest roars within this pale,  
Whilst ventilators catch the cooling gale.  
But, should a tempest in *your* quarter rise,  
'Twould scare us more than thunder in the skies:  
Guiltless to *You* the storm within these doors;  
Do You then save *us* harmless, Sirs! from *yours*.

# PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

## M E N.

KING	Mr. Usher.
WESTMORELAND	Mr. Digges.
EDWARD	Mr. Dimond.
GONDIBERT	Mr. Palmer.
EGBERT	Mr. Aicken.
OFFICER	Mr. Egan.
OSWALD	Mr. R. Palmer.
STEWARD to <i>Westmoreland</i>	Mr. Gardner.

## W O M E N.

ALBINA	Mrs. Massey.
EDITHA	Miss Sherry.
ADELA	Mrs. Pouffin.
INA	Mrs. Le Fevre.

*Guards and Attendants.*

# A L B I N A,

Countess RAIMOND,

A T R A G E D Y.

A C T I.

SCENE, *A magnificent Hall in the Gothic style.*

*Enter the Earl of Westmoreland, and a Gentleman.*

WESTMORELAND.

**B**EAR back my duty to my royal Master;  
Tell him I will obey his gracious summons,  
And meet the Council at th'appointed hour:—  
—Yet would I hope the flying rumour false.

GENTLEMAN.

Too well, my Lord, the tidings are confirm'd;  
Again the sacrilegious Turk hath broke  
The peace he ask'd—again the Crescent's rear'd  
Upon the Holy Plains, whilst yellow streamers,  
Fann'd-by the wanton air, which late embrac'd  
The Christian standard, to the world proclaim  
The impious war.

WESTMORELAND.

Give back the years, O Time!  
When such a tale as this had fir'd my soul,  
And sped me to th'unrighteous camp, on wings  
Of holy zeal! The fire's not yet extinct,  
But cank'ring age the sinews of my youth  
Hath eat away.

B

GEN-

## A L B I N A,

GENTLEMAN.

Be not thus thankless to an age,  
Which in its slow advance, to gain a welcome,  
Brought honours, triumphs, and a nation's love!

WESTMORELAND.

Forbear! Thou com'st a messenger of war;  
Away then with the flatt'ring arts of peace,  
And deal in words more suited to the times!

GENTLEMAN.

Your pardon, Lord! Know then, the King in haste  
Orders his vet'ran Nobles to attend him.  
A powerful army he'll in person lead  
To Asia's plains. Ten thousand choicest warriors  
Mean time are his precursors to the field,  
Led on by him they love—the gallant Edward—  
Who, ere the down of youth forsook his cheek,  
Deeds had perform'd that laurell'd age might envy.

WESTMORELAND.

His manhood will fulfill his youth's fair promise—  
—A star, or I mistake, which rose in splendor,  
And will in glory set. Had Heaven bestow'd  
On me a son like him, without regret  
I'd sink into the arms of nerveless age;  
Count *his* exploits, grow vain upon his conquests;  
And, when my Country claim'd her ancient warrior,  
I'd proudly show my Son.

GENTLEMAN.

Though from your prayers a Son hath been withheld,  
A Daughter was bestow'd, so rich in graces,  
So excellent in mind—

WESTMORELAND.

She's my heart's darling—  
—My only pledge of chaste connubial love!  
Her mother's beauty, and her mother's worth,  
Survive the grave—They live in my Albina!

*Enter*

# A T R A G E D Y.

*Enter a Servant.*

SERVANT.

The Lord Edward, with earnestness, demands  
An audience of your grace.

WESTMORELAND.

Instant admit him. [*Ex. Serv. and Gent.*]  
He comes, to boast a Soldier's happiness.

*Enter Lord Edward.*

WESTMORELAND.

Welcome, young Hero! I partake the transports  
Which this high honour, this unsought command,  
Must give a heart—panting, like yours—for Glory.

EDWARD.

My Lord! [*confusedly.*]

WESTMORELAND.

How's this! have I misread your heart?  
Now, whilst our fiery youth are all in arms,  
And martial ardors dart from ev'ry eye;  
Edward, as if oppress'd with maiden shame,  
Blushing, averts his head—

EDWARD.

Well may I blush!  
The Soldier, chosen by the King, to lead  
His warlike bands, and carry Britain's thunder  
To holy Zion's gates—he whose rapt bosom,  
No shame, but glory, should confess—  
—He stands before you, with a fainting heart,  
To tell a tale—of love.

WESTMORELAND.

The time's unapt;  
Yet 'tis a tale at which a Soldier needs not blush.  
He, who most ardent in the sanguine field,  
Contemning danger, braves the whizzing storm;  
He is most fit to storm a Maid's reluctance,  
He best deserves the happiness of love.

## A L B I N A,

E D W A R D.

This, from a Hero's mouth, warrants my sighs.  
 Edward no longer then shall fear to own  
 The power of filken tresses, and fair eyes :  
 But, Westmoreland ! with equal patience hear  
 That she, who in my heart hath rais'd this flame—  
 —She, who doth pitiless receive its sighs,  
 Is matchless Raimond—is thy beauteous Daughter !

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Heaven, I thank thee ! [*aside.*] Is this a sudden passion,  
 Bred from the fever of hot youthful blood ?  
 Or kindled by some casual glance ?

E D W A R D.

Oh no !

A faithful Love—with my existence twist'd ;  
 Nor know I when th'attachment first began.  
 Deep in my heart she'd fix'd her beauteous image  
 When, by my father sent, I England left  
 For distant lands.

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

So early !

E D W A R D.

E'en so early.

Ere glory or ambition touch'd my breast,  
 Albina fill'd it with resistless love.

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Had you disclos'd your passion to my Daughter ?

E D W A R D.

If the unartful language of mine eyes  
 Disclos'd the tale, she knew I was her slave ;  
 But youthful bashfulness seal'd up my lips :  
 And when I left—reluctant—Albion's shores,  
 Not one soft glance my longing eye could catch  
 To sooth the raging passion in my breast.

W E S T.

WESTMORELAND.

But Gallia's shores a ready cure bestow'd:  
*Her* beauties kindly heal the wounds they give,  
 Nor let their lovers *linguish* in their chains.

EDWARD.

In vain the beauties of the Gallic Court  
 Spread out their nets—In vain the dainties of Italy  
 Display'd their charms—Impatient I return'd  
 To lay my heart at your Albina's feet—  
 —Oh day of horror! She was wife of Raimond!  
 Fury, despair, seiz'd my distracted mind—  
 I curs'd his fortune, curs'd myself, and loath'd  
 His hated name——

WESTMORELAND.

Young Lord, you do forget  
 Earl Raimond was my Son—the chosen Husband  
 To whom *I* gave Albina.

EDWARD.

Oh pardon, Sir, the transports of my grief,  
 Which, at this *distant* period, shake my frame,  
 And guess from them what Edward hath endur'd!  
 Earl Raimond's arms, and mine, against the Saracens  
 Our monarch did command—and then I *prov'd*  
 That I was *worthy* of Albina's hand.

WESTMORELAND.

Your valiant acts by fame have been proclaim'd,

EDWARD.

Of fame, of valour, 'tis not that I boast,  
 'Tis not the prowess of my arm in war,  
 'Tis of a deed a Roman might have claim'd,  
 And you will thank——

WESTMORELAND.

You warm my expectation.

EDWARD.

'Twas on a day, when truce had been proclaim'd,  
 I pass'd beyond the lines t'observe the foe.

Directed

Directed by the gleams of burnish'd mail,  
 Within the bosom of a tufted thicket,  
 Three Saracens, waging unequal fight  
 Against one English warrior, I espy'd.  
 My bounding courser bore me to the spot—  
 There Raimond I beheld, o'erpow'r'd and prone :  
 Lifting this temper'd sword, I cleft the arm  
 Which, aiming at his heart, had instant pierc'd it—  
 He rose with strength renew'd, and we grew victors.

WESTMORELAND.

Talk not of *Roman*, 'twas a *Briton's* act,  
 And well became a Christian warrior.  
 Go to Albina—boldly speak your passion—  
 She must, she shall, reward thy truth and honour !  
 Tell her, her Father doth approve thy suit,  
 And speeds thee, with his wishes, to her heart.

EDWARD.

For this, O noble Westmoreland ! I thank thee ;  
 But vainly I've assail'd with warmest vows  
 Albina's heart : Sorrow, like a chill atmosphere,  
 The beauteous dame surrounds, quenching each dart—  
 Each burning dart of love.—

WESTMORELAND.

Oh, you've not yet been vers'd in women's ways.  
 You, who can brave Bellona, when she shakes  
 Her iron locks, I warrant, are dismay'd  
 At Beauty's frown, and tremble if she sweeps  
 Her train in scorn : But you must learn t'o'erlook  
 An hundred follies—vanity behold  
 In every shifting form, and yet be pleas'd—  
 Still patiently admire, or never hope  
 To win fantastic woman.

EDWARD.

Oh, such services  
 Albina never claim'd ; yet, if she did,  
 Whole years I'd spend to gratify her taste,

And

And would be any thing to please her phantasy—  
 But now, to those sweet homages which Love  
 Delights to pay, a cruel period's fix'd—  
 Within three days, England I quit for Palestine.

WESTMORELAND.

'Tis a short period. It will scarcely serve  
 To break a piece of gold, or carve her name,  
 With your's entwin'd, on some young willow's bark.

EDWARD.

Ah, my good Lord, treat not my griefs thus lightly!  
 For if I leave your Daughter, Raimond's widow,  
 I go to certain death—if Edward's Bride,  
 I will return in triumph to her arms,  
 Lay my proud laurels at Albina's feet,  
 And seek no future glory, but her love.

WESTMORELAND.

Well, to my Daughter I will plead your cause.  
 This do I owe the love your Father bore me,  
 And to the fame your virtues have attain'd—  
 Here meet me in an hour, and hope success.

EDWARD.

This—this, O Westmoreland! I dar'd to hope;  
 Yet joy and gratitude, like fires confin'd,  
 Struggle within my heart for room—for utterance—  
 My tongue, unus'd to descant on felicity,  
 Denies its words—yet trust to me—

WESTMORELAND.

Nay keep them  
 For purposes more fit; words may win Ladies,  
 But Soldiers must be won by deeds! [*Exeunt severally.*]

# ALBINA,

SCENE, *A Garden belonging to Albina.*

*Enter Editha followed by Adela.*

EDITHA.

Why shines the sun thus *gaily* on the world?  
 Why do the feather'd habitants of air  
 With melody, and cheery songs, insult me?  
 Is it to prove that, 'mongst all Nature's beings,  
 I am the most unblest? Th'unconscious birds  
 Chant songs of gratitude for good possess'd;  
 I know no good—I feel no gratitude—  
 —An outcast, and undone!

ADELA.

Your sorrows, Madam,  
 Seem to gain strength with time!

EDITHA.

To griefs like mine,  
 Time brings no lenient balm. Each dawning day  
 Is a fresh witness of my abject state.  
 Born, Adela, to an exalted rank,  
 Bright pomp attending on my early years,  
 And blessings springing round me as I trod—  
 —Oh! thou should'st wonder that my swelling soul  
 Can stoop a moment to this vile dependence—  
 —It cannot stoop! Misfortune bears upon me,  
 But my aspiring mind is unsubdu'd.

ADELA.

You think too deeply; sorrows keen as yours  
 Are frequent in the page of human life.

EDITHA.

'Tis from our *feelings* sorrows take their force—  
 —And what are mine? State, fortune, rank, with all  
 The joys they bring, torn from my eager grasp—  
 —Torn from my grasp, still present to my thoughts;  
 Their shadows haunt me, whilst I bend my knee,  
 And humbly take, with thanks, my daily bread!

ADELA.

# A T R A G E D Y.

9

A D E L A.

Alas ! you think unjustly of the Countess :  
Still amiable and good, she sooths your griefs,  
And, with unceasing kindness——

E D I T H A.

Hah ! her kindness !

And was I born to bear Albina's *kindness* ?  
Thou, who art left the sole remaining wreck  
Of my lost grandeur, knew'st me once her equal.  
Her goodness tortures me—Earl Sibald's heir  
Should grant, and not receive ; she should *protect*,  
Not seek protection.

A D E L A.

Though now dependent,  
Yet still such blessings do attend your state——

E D I T H A.

Thou, Adela ! to low dependence born,  
Enjoy'st its little comforts ; me they torture—  
—The height from which I fell, I must reclimb—  
—The tow'ring Eagle builds not with the Thrush,  
Nor stoops to batten with the lowly Wren.

A D E L A.

Why struggle thus with fate ? The noble Countess  
Studies your welfare, and deserves your love.

E D I T H A.

Had I ne'er fall'n, and were I not dependent,  
I might perhaps esteem, nay, I might love her ;  
But now !—hear my whole soul—then think, my Adela !  
*How* I must love her ! Know that 'tis through Edward,  
Through Edward only, I can hope to gain  
The glorious steep from which my fate has cast me—  
But this Albina—she whom I must *love*,  
Hath caught his sordid vows in nets of gold.

A D E L A.

Is't possible ? Lord Edward !

C

EDITHA.

EDITHA.

Even him.

ADELA.

Sure 'twas his Father that brought woe on yours;  
 He wing'd the ruin that o'erwhelms your House—  
 —He caus'd the ills you mourn.

EDITHA.

Have I forgot it?

No.—His stern loyalty made me an orphan,  
 And Edward shall repair my bitter wrongs.  
 The only good Editha can accept,  
 Is to partake his greatness, and his name.—  
 —That would be bliss; all less than that is *insult*.

ADELA.

Will then Lord Edward—will this bliss be yours?

EDITHA.

The Countess stands 'twixt me and all my hopes.  
 Had Fortune smil'd less lavishly on her,  
 Edward's whole heart had been resign'd to me—  
 And I restored to all my native honours.

ADELA.

And why not still? for she, reserv'd and cold,  
 With unselecting eye, beholds her lovers,  
 And Edward sinks unmark'd amidst the crowd.

EDITHA.

So may he still!

Raimond scorn Edward! and thou, Edward, know  
 That all my native hate is but suspended—  
 —My mind's in equipoise, ready alike  
 To hold thee as my Lover, or my Foe!

ADELA.

The Countess and her Father come this way.

EDITHA.

Hah! then retire unseen [*Exit Adela.*] My low estate  
 May make me deem'd obtruder on their privacy—  
 —This bow'r conceals me. [*Enters the Bower.*

*Enter*

# A TRAGEDY.

11

## SCENE *continues.*

*Enter Westmoreland and Albina.*

ALBINA.

Oh, my good Lord, urge not your daughter thus!  
Ne'er be it said of noble Raimond's widow,  
That she grew sick of weeds in one short year,  
And lightly chang'd them for the bridal vest.

WESTMORELAND.

Full fourteen months have led their pensive hours,  
Since the sad obsequies of your dead Lord:—  
He was the Husband of *my* choice, whom you  
In duty took—

ALBINA.

And will in duty mourn.  
Nay, had Albina's heart forgot the virtues,  
Which made her Lord so worthy of its love;  
Yet still she dares not slight the laws of custom,  
Nor to licentious tongues give themes for slander.

WESTMORELAND.

Enough to custom, and to grief, thou'st giv'n.  
Wilt waste thy blooming youth in widowhood,  
Because some months you bore the name of Wife?

ALBINA.

I have not sworn to know no second love.  
To Raimond's mem'ry grant another year;  
And then—in truth, my Lord, you prompt my tongue  
Beyond discretion's bounds.

WESTMORELAND.

Come, come, Albina;  
Though to a Lover you might wear this guise,  
Of coy reserve, yet, to a Father's eye,  
Your mind should now appear as legible  
As in the days of prattling infancy.  
Raimond deserv'd the tribute of your tears,  
And you have wept a deluge to his *manes*.

Consider now, the brave, the youthful Edward—  
 The prize for whom contending beauties strive !  
 His name and wealth amongst the first are rank'd,  
 And he stands high in royal Henry's favour.

A L B I N A.

I know his merits, and I know his love ;  
 Nay, I will own that when my dying Lord  
 From Palestina wrote, he gave me charge,  
 That if again the holy marriage bonds  
 I e'er should wear, that I should chuse—beyond  
 All others chuse—his Friend, the noble Edward ;  
 But did not bid me hymeneals sing  
 Upon his turfless grave.

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Then sing his dirge,  
 And with it join Lord Edward's, who'll perchance  
 Be soon entomb'd—victim alike of love  
 And war.

A L B I N A.

Say you, my Lord !

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

I say, my Lady,  
 That in three days Edward returns to Palestine.  
 Our Royal Master hath on him bestow'd  
 The levies for the Holy War ; from which  
 He'll ne'er return, save he leaves you his Wife.

A L B I N A.

Can this be true ?—Or do you mean to try  
 If in my heart there is not hid more love  
 For Edward, than modesty would own ?

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Truly not :  
 Modesty hath not wove so thick a shade

As to conceal your love. To Holy Land  
He surely goes—In triumph to return,  
Or hopeless die—Albina must decree.

A L B I N A.

Then coy reserve, and women's arts, adieu !  
Danger tears off the veil——  
Oh, spare my burning blushes whilst I own,  
Edward is dearer to Albina's heart  
Than fame or conquest to the bever'd soldier.

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Well said, my child !——

A L B I N A.

When on Lord Raimond you bestow'd my hand,  
E'en then the image of the blooming Edward  
Made duty—to my heart—an arduous task ;  
But virtue aided my devoted mind,  
Whilst Raimond's worth, and manly tenderness,  
Had, I believ'd, converted all my love—  
—'Till freedom taught that virtue had but *bid*,  
Not *raised*, the deep impression.

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Weil may my heart be proud of such a daughter !  
Oh, the pure transport !—The exalted joy !  
By fav'ring Heaven for *parents* minds reserv'd,  
When in the fiery combat of the passions,  
Their children rise, victorious from the trial !  
By honour led—by sacred virtue crown'd !  
To thee I give a Child's most glorious meed, [*to Albina.*]  
To thee I give a Father's grateful thanks.

A L B I N A.

Alas ! my Lord, you much o'errate a duty,  
In which to fail, were gross—were deadly shame.

W E S T.

## WESTMORELAND.

The best reward, Albina, now awaits thee ;  
 Thy Edward loves thee—loves with fervent truth—  
 —Yield then thy hand, to him who wears thy heart ;  
 Let me, to-morrow, greet Lord Edward—Son !

## A L B I N A.

Oh grant a longer space—a few short days,  
 To cheer the sadness from my widow'd brow, —  
 Lest I insult the blissful marriage feast  
 With pensiveness, ill-suited to the day !

## WESTMORELAND.

Within three days, Edward must England quit,  
 —Must quit the land where Peace and Beauty reign,  
 For hostile camps, and scenes of savage war !  
 To-morrow, then, consent to be his Bride—  
 —To-morrow, bless the Man thy Country honours !  
 A Father—'tis a Father asks the boon.

## A L B I N A.

The boon my Father ask'd, my heart or lips  
 Have never yet denied ; to-morrow, then—  
 —Since you, my Lord, command—to-morrow's sun  
 Beholds Lord Raimond's Widow, Edward's Bride.

## WESTMORELAND.

Then all that's good, shine doubly in its beams !  
 Ye passing moments, bear away her sorrows ;  
 Ye which approach, come fledg'd with young delights.  
 —Lead on the dawn that crowns her truth and virtue ;  
 Be it distinguish'd in Time's circling ring,  
 Mark'd out with blessings and peculiar joys—  
 —The favor'd morn that makes Albina happy !

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter Editha from the Bower.*

## E D I T H A.

Be it *accurs'd* ! Oh torture ! are my hopes,  
 Like airy visions, fled ? The darling hope,

Which

Which hath enrich'd life's barren scenes, is vanish'd,  
And I awake to horror! mad'ning thought!  
Albina triumphs—and Editha's scorn'd!  
All that remains of yesterday's gay dream  
Is to behold a haughty rival's bliss—  
At grov'ling distance, see her tow'ring fate,  
And pine away a hated life in envy.

*Enter Albina.*

A L B I N A.

In tears, Editha! Whence such marks of woe,  
Whilst joy and happiness beam forth on me?

E D I T H A.

When I have cause, I too shall boast of joy,  
And brave the mischiefs of the scorning world.

A L B I N A.

Hear then a cause! You know, with ardent passion,  
The noble Edward long hath sought my love—  
Now know, that, though conceal'd, the tender flame  
Within my bosom glow'd; and that, to-morrow,  
The holy rites will sanctify our love.

E D I T H A.

You, therefore, may rejoice—but on Editha  
What glorious fortune beams, that she must yield  
Her heart to joy, and dress her face in smiles?

A L B I N A.

What bliss e'er shone on me, that reach'd not you?  
Come, chase away this unavailing gloom!  
Albina is your friend; and, in her love,  
Thou shalt find shelter from the world's cold frowns.

E D I T H A.

More hateful is this insolence of goodness,  
More cutting, than contempt. [*Aside.*] I thank you,  
Madam.

Well do I know, I am your bounty's creature:  
Your table feeds me, and your coffers clothe.

I, who

I, who boast ancestry as great as yours,  
Am now dependent on your charity.

A L B I N A.

And blame you me for this, unjust Editha?  
Your ruin'd fortunes often have I mourn'd,  
And sooth'd your sorrows with a sister's kindness.  
Methinks you lack your usual courtesy.

E D I T H A.

Your pardon, Lady!——  
You know I am not fashion'd like my sex;  
I have no sympathy for Lover's feelings;  
Their hopes, their fears, their soft sollicitudes,  
Have *here* no unison—the fire which animates  
My breast, is a true flame—'tis bright ambition!

A L B I N A.

Ambition was not meant for feeble woman.  
Leave it the boist'rous sex, whose minds capacious  
Are aptly fitted to so proud a guest!  
A sweeter province Nature gave to us—  
—As a fond parent to its last-born child,  
For woman she reserv'd her choicest gift,  
And call'd the blessing—Love——

E D I T H A.

Love! be thou ever stranger to my heart!  
Thee, more than age, or ugliness, I dread!  
Who gives thee place, a ruthless serpent bosoms  
To poison her repose, and snare her virtue!  
Thou merciless dost wreck the virgin's fame,  
Shadowing all her chearful morn of life,  
As dreary vapours veil the bright Aurora,  
Folding in dismal gloom the springing day.  
The curse pronounc'd on disobedient woman  
In love is wrap'd, inflicted, and fulfill'd.

A L B I N A.

Oh, 'tis all false! Thou dost profane the source  
From whence our blessings spring.—

The heart untouch'd by love, is like a lute,  
Whose pow'rs the master never hath call'd forth,  
Or with unskilful finger struck harsh discords;  
Yet touch with truth the strings, and harmony will flow,  
And tones mellifluous enchant the ear,  
Filling with melting music empty space.  
When these effusions of a *female* heart  
Thou canst with patience bear—Editha, find me!

[*Exit.*

## E D I T H A.

First will I find Lord Gondibert.—  
What revolutions hath this *love* accomplish'd!  
And shall less power belong to bright *ambition*?  
Ambition! thou whose hallow'd flame can live  
Only in minds refin'd from the gross elements  
Of which the *herd* of human kind are made!  
This Deity of Fools shall yield to *thee*.  
I'll strait to Gondibert, whose long-pent passion  
Will, like a torrent, from its mound break forth,  
O'erwhelming its opposers: his fierce transports  
With the soft voice of Friendship I will meet,  
And *guide* them to my purpose.

END OF ACT I.

## A C T II.

SCENE, *A Gothic Colonnade.**Enter Gondibert, followed by Egbert.*

E G B E R T.

**M**Y Lord, your sorrows pierce my aged heart ;  
But I entreat you lend an ear to reason !

G O N D I B E R T.

Reason ! Distraction !

E G B E R T.

When you, my Lord, did study in the schools,  
I've heard you much of Reason talk, Philosophy,  
And Virtue—now, when all their force you want,  
You spurn them, with a blind contempt, away.

G O N D I B E R T.

They have *no* force, *no* pow'r, beyond the schools  
Where they are taught. Dost think the fools who  
preach 'em  
E'er felt, like me, the energies of passion,  
Or the keen torture of an hopeless Love ?

E G B E R T.

That it *is* hopeless, is a cause—

G O N D I B E R T.

For madness—Cease, Egbert—thy chilly blood,  
Creeping with torpid motion through thy veins,  
Ill suits thee for a counsellor to me.  
Give me one made of fire ! one whose high mind,  
Superior to the bugbears of his childhood,  
Makes Virtue and Philosophy his servants ;  
Not stoops to be their slave !

E G B E R T.

E G B E R T.

Think on the bars,  
Th'eternal bars, that Heav'n hath plac'd between you!—  
Think—she's your Sister!

G O N D I B E R T.

Curfes on the word!

It is a viper's sting—an incantation,  
That conjures up an hundred fiends to rack me.  
Oh! were she *not* my Sister!—Egbert, Egbert!  
I could turn girl, to think on what I've lost—  
—But two short days before my Brother's marriage,  
I from the war return'd; and the first hour  
She met my ravish'd eyes—was at the altar.

E G B E R T.

It was, in truth, my Lord, a trying moment.

G O N D I B E R T.

Oh! should the curtain'd sun, in full refulgence,  
Dart through the shadows of the night his beams;  
Not more amaze would seize the minds of mortals,  
Than seiz'd on me when I beheld Albina.  
Oh, my curst fortune! one short week had fav'd me.  
For sure the ardors of my burning love—  
The pow'rful pleadings of my youth, and form,  
Must soon have taught the timid, beauteous Maid,  
That Raimond were for Gondibert well chang'd.

E G B E R T.

Your sorrow, then, you virtuously o'ercame;  
Why should it now break out with strength renew'd?

G O N D I B E R T.

Will she not wed again?—

I could have borne my life without more bliss  
Than the soft rights which custom gives a Brother;  
To see her ev'ry day—to fix my eyes,  
Whole hours, with doating love, upon her face—  
'To feast my ears with the bewitching music  
Of her sweet voice—Oh, 'twas a mine of happiness!

E G B E R T.

E G B E R T.

It was a *snare* that might have plung'd you both  
In irremediable woe!

G O N D I B E R T.

Impossible!

For I do swear, such mast'ry of my passion  
Had I obtain'd, to such refinement rais'd it,  
Angels with greater purity ne'er lov'd:  
No with unhallow'd liv'd within my breast.  
But shall she to another yield her heart—  
Yield her whole self!——  
Earth open first, and swallow me! Or snatch him—  
Oh swift perdition!—snatch him from his joys!

E G B E R T.

Oh, yield not thus, my Lord, to your wild passions!  
Like calentures, they will mislead your reason,  
With images that no where do exist,  
But in their own false colours.

G O N D I B E R T.

He—this Edward,

As my ill star, doth ever cross my fortune.  
His headlong valour in the field my name  
Obscur'd; and in the tournament at Orleans,  
In th'eye of France, he bore from me the crown:  
And now he tears away the scanty bliss,  
Which whilst I did possess, I envy'd not  
His trophies, or his fame.

E G B E R T.

Then be reveng'd!

Strive to regain the fame of which he robs you—  
Court Glory—woo her in the fields of Death!  
She's the fit mistress for your rank and years!  
Oh, tname! to waste those days in languid sighs,  
In which your mighty Ancestors obtain'd  
Their deathless names—by deeds of hardy valour,  
In guarding their dear Country's precious rights.

G O N-

## GONDIBERT.

Albina wed ! No.—

All arts I'll try ; and, if they fail, this arm—

This arm shall drench their marriage-torch in blood !

[*Exit.*

## E G B E R T.

How do rude passions the fair mind destroy,  
Bestow'd by Heaven from the all-perfect source !  
This Gondibert would once have shrunk from vice,  
As the chaste plant that bears no mortal touch.  
From infancy I've watch'd his springing virtues ;  
Seen him beat back misfortunes when they clung,  
Like wary Cowards, on each other's skirts ;  
And bear, with fortitude, Affliction's stripes.  
But now, unhallow'd Love the pile destroys ;  
And Vice will triumph o'er the noble ruin.

Still must I save him. If one spark of virtue  
Yet hovers in his mind—Oh, grant me, Heaven !  
To kindle it afresh, and be the flame immortal !

[*Exit.*

S C E N E, *An Apartment.*

Edward and Albina discovered sitting on a Couch.

E D W A R D. [*rising.*

Blest be the orders which thou deem'st so cruel.  
But for the King's command, more irksome years  
I might have sigh'd, without a gleam of hope,  
Nor known—Oh transport ! I was dear to thee.  
That rapt'rous thought is presage sure of vict'ry—  
—'Twill give thy Edward's arm resistless force,  
And fire his soul with more than mortal valour.

## A L B I N A.

Ah ! Love, that fill'd your breast, whilst doubts and  
fears

Did feed its flame, already yields to glory.

Your

Your eye, by strong imagination fir'd,  
 Impatient glances through the burnish'd field—  
 —The clang of arms arouses ev'ry sense,  
 The songs of triumph vibrate on your ear—  
 —Love and Albina are alike forgot,  
 And you're again the Hero!

E D W A R D.

Then may cowardice  
 Enerve this arm, when with our valiant hosts  
 I shall oppose the Mockers of our Faith!  
 May I forsake, in fight of armed nations,  
 The Holy Cross, and trembling, plead for mercy,  
 If for one moment I forget Albina!  
 'Tis o'er thy charms mine eye impatient roves—  
 —The ardors of my love, that you accuse.

A L B I N A.

Will you i'th' battle's conflict think on me?  
 And will you, when seducing glory prompts  
 To some advent'rous charge—remember then,  
 That 'tis Albina's life which you expose?

E D W A R D.

O Glory! Conquest! what are ye to this?  
 Yes, I do swear, thou Mistress of my Fate!  
 Thy bright enchanting image shall with-hold me,  
 When a rash enterprise may court my daring.  
 Mine is no common life—to thee united;  
 Mark'd out for bliss extreme, and boundless joy,  
 As thine I will preserve.

A L B I N A.

Here is my picture.  
 When the shrill trumpet gives the awful signal—  
 Ere, in the dreadful ardour of the fight,  
 Reflection's lost—Oh bind it on your arm!  
 When you do look on't, think you see its smiles  
 To horrors turn'd; the chearful eye bedimm'd

With

# A T R A G E D Y.

25

With ceaseless tears; its lips reproaching you  
With deeming lightly of the life to her  
Engag'd, whose form it bears.

E D W A R D.

How shall I thank thee

For this rich gift? It is a talisman  
Which will protect me when hemm'd in by dangers,  
And turn aside Death's blunted arrows.

*Enter a Female Attendant.*

A T T E N D A N T.

Lord Gondibert, if it so please you, Madam,  
Hath weighty matters for your private ear. [Exit.

E D W A R D.

Lord Gondibert!

A L B I N A.

He hath a Brother's right;  
And doth regard me for his Brother's sake.  
Indulge us now, my Lord, with privacy!  
'Tis the sole day—oh, may the sound delight thee!  
In which thou wilt not claim all embassies to me.

E D W A R D.

Farewell then, sweet! farewell, my sweet Albina!  
How dear, how precious, doth the time become,  
Enrich'd with happiness like mine! To leave thee  
A moment now, seems a lost age in love. [Exit.

*Enter Gondibert.*

G O N D I B E R T.

Pardon th'obtruder, Madam, who unbidden  
Breaks on your happy hours—

A L B I N A.

This stern excuse,

And that impassion'd air, seem meant for chiding;  
Such looks sit strangely on a Brother's brow—  
They're most unkind!

G O N.

GONDIBERT.

Smiles, and unruffled looks,  
 Become those favour'd youths, who at the feet  
 Of rigid Beauty may—oh! Raimond, bear with me!  
 Fain would I speak to thee with angel's softness,  
 But tides of passion bear my wishes down!

ALBINA.

Of what would'st speak?

GONDIBERT.

Of Him.

ALBINA.

Of whom? Lord Edward?

GONDIBERT.

Yes, he—Edward—your Paramour!

ALBINA.

How's this!

Is this—this rude reproof, from Gondibert!

GONDIBERT.

From whom then should it, Madam, but his Brother,  
 Whose memory you wear so light? These fables  
 Ill suit the wanton spirit of your eyes;  
 Your air, as ill, the sober guise of widowhood.

ALBINA.

Surely, my Lord, you stretch a Brother's privilege  
 Beyond its bounds. Doth Gondibert presume—  
 Doth he Albina dare accuse, in words  
 That would beset the loofest of her sex? [Weeps.

GONDIBERT.

Would *all* your passions might thus melt in tears,  
 And weep themselves away! The probe of truth  
 Doth touch you, Lady—you must bear it still.  
 The public voice condemns your eager marriage;  
 And maidens blush, that she, who lately shone  
 The bright, the envied sample of their sex,  
 Now sudden, like a panting fawn, o'ersprings  
 The fence—that painfully she hath endur'd.

ALBINA.

ALBINA.

Tears would disgrace me now. Bethink you, Sir,  
 'Tis Raimond's Widow whom you thus insult—  
 'Tis his—your Brother's honour, which you wound  
 With these base taunts. I do believe you're false.  
 The public voice dares not arraign my conduct—  
 —Or, if it did—the Brother of Lord Raimond  
 Should surely *punish*, not *avow* their slanders.

GONDIBERT.

Oh, he would trample on the slanderer  
 Of Raimond's faithful Widow—with his blood—  
 With life itself, defend her name, and honour;  
 But the coarse slanders thrown on Edward's *Wife*,  
 He can behold unmov'd, and unreveng'd.

ALBINA.

The Wife of Edward needs no *other* arm;  
 He will protect me; *he's* my guard, and champion.

GONDIBERT.

Then *arm* him! and in me behold the guard,  
 The champion, of dead Raimond's memory—  
 Dishonour'd by your passion.

ALBINA.

Hah! dishonour'd!

Where's the proud Dame, whose glory would not be  
 Lord Edward's love? Is there a fame so bright  
 In Henry's court? His noble birth is vulgar,  
 Placed by his nobler qualities. His mind  
 Knowledge illumines, and bright Virtue loves.

GONDIBERT.

Perish his fame—his virtues!—I abhor him.

ALBINA.

He who abhors my Edward, must shun me.  
 Farewell, my Lord! Henceforward he alone  
 Can meet a welcome here, who pays just tribute  
 To Edward's worth.

[Exit.

E

GON-

## GONDIBERT.

Oh, stay—Albina, stay!

Hah, gorse! Curse on my fierce impetuous passions!  
 What have I done? I've work'd her up to hatred—  
 In the sole moment that my fate allow'd  
 To win her from the purpose which undoes me.  
 Fool! fool! were *such* the arts I had devis'd?  
 Fury, and threats, are *ye* the wiles of love?  
 Oh, I have fix'd my fate!—Albina will be Edward's.  
 Hold, hold, thou cracking brain!—one hope's still left—  
 One road's still open, to prevent their marriage,  
 Or to escape the woe.—I'll challenge Edward:  
*He falls, or I; and which, to me is equal.* [Going.

*Enter Editha.*

## EDITHA.

Thou child of fury! Victim of blind passions!  
 Why challenge Edward?

## GONDIBERT.

Why! because I hate him,  
 My vengeance and my love demand the trial—  
 Both he must satisfy, or both destroy.

## EDITHA.

Obey their impulse—Be reveng'd and happy!  
 But risk not on a rival's sword thy life.

## GONDIBERT.

Ha! how?—what, meanly steal a coward's triumph;  
 Snatch a vile conquest that my sword might purchase—  
 —Creep, an *Assassin*, on his guardless hours—

## EDITHA.

Still wilfully, my Lord, you wrest my words.  
 No plot upon his life I've form'd—Then hear me!  
 On what pretences canst thou challenge Edward?  
 Wilt thou proclaim thy love for Raimond? No.  
 Love so unsanction'd starts from human customs,  
 And from all human laws. Yet still methinks  
 He should not win the Countess.

# A T R A G E D Y.

27

GONDIBERT.

Should not! *shall* not.

EDITHA.

With what an insolent content he left her,  
He pass'd me! but too full of bliss was he,  
To see an object less than his Albina.  
Sudden it struck me—now, with how much ease  
This haughty joy might be transform'd to woe!  
Thy heart now swelling with triumphant passion,  
A little word, that touch'd it with suspicion,  
Would, with a serpent's tooth, its raptures cure.  
—Suspicion, once awaken'd, never sleeps.

GONDIBERT.

Suspicion! of Albina!

EDITHA.

Yes—suspicion,

Infuse its poison!—'twill be balm to thee.

GONDIBERT.

Impossible!—

Resplendent lilies, that in deserts bloom,  
Where man's licentious eye hath never roam'd,  
Boast less unsullied pureness than her mind.

EDITHA.

Though to the world she spotless may appear  
As mountain snow, yet can no doubtful tint  
By a suspicious *Brother* be discern'd?  
Lord Raimond may have trusted Gondibert  
With fears that he kept chary from the world;  
Or, may not you in some unguarded moment—  
—Admitted by a Brother's rights, have caught  
Her frigid virtue melting at the suit  
Of some young Paramour?

GONDIBERT.

Hah!

EDITHA.

Your tried honour

Must stamp the story with the face of truth,

And force conviction on his heart, in spite  
Of all the doubts which passion may retain  
To plead in Beauty's cause.

GONDIBERT.

Oh, ye just powers !

What must the passion, what, be the despair  
That prompts my haughty soul to such mean arts ?  
Deceit ! till now, a stranger to my heart,  
Welcome ! with all thy wiles——  
Upon my tongue distil thy subtile poison  
To blister Edward's peace ! Yet 'tis not possible ;  
One look, one tone of her's, would controvert  
The blackest tales that malice could suggest.

EDITHA.

Let him but feel the sting of jealousy,  
And every tone, and look, will fix it deeper.

GONDIBERT.

Should he be wrought to such accurst belief,  
Not he alone, but all mankind would scorn her—  
The antiquated Maid, the Wife, the Hypocrite,  
Whilst the loose Wanton hails, with impious joy,  
A Sister in Albina. Horrid thought !  
That form, beheld by the admiring world  
With chaste respect—shall it with loose contempt  
Be gaz'd on ?—shall the angelic mind of her  
My soul adores, e'er feel the stings, the bitterness  
Of scorn !

EDITHA.

Be it thy prayer, thy hope, thy comfort !  
Think on the riches of that bounteous hour  
When Raimond, drooping, sunk beneath the shame  
The world will pour upon her guiltless head—  
—By Edward left—abandon'd by her Father ;  
The eye of Nature, Virtue, Friendship, shut ;  
In thee *alone*, she finds respect and love !  
Beholds thee weep her woes, and share her anguish—  
—Accomplish this, and thank thy lib'ral stars !

## GONDIBERT.

Oh, 'twere a boundless luxury of bliss!  
 I'd steal her sorrows, rob her of her griefs,  
 And give her, in exchange, soft peace and love.  
 Yet, oh! it cannot be—*me* she'd regard  
 With a cold *Sister's* brow.

## EDITHA.

Lovers, 'tis said,  
 Have eagles' fight, that can interpret glances,  
 And the soft language of a blush explain;  
 But eyes and blushes speak in vain to you—  
 Or you have read them backwards.

## GONDIBERT.

Ha! what say'st thou?  
 Lead not, I charge thee, to such dang'rous heights!  
 Yet tell me——

## EDITHA.

Tell thee! Strange, that Gondibert,  
 He who can penetrate the veil of policy,  
 Detect the sophist's arts, and trace the chain  
 Whose hidden links controul the will of man,  
 That he should need be *told*, what not to *know*  
 Argues gross blindness, or determin'd error.

## GONDIBERT.

Blindness to what? Editha, speak.—Explain!

## EDITHA.

Recall then to your mind the marriage months  
 Of the deceased Lord.—Did no complaint,  
 No word ambiguous, e'er escape his lips,  
 Reflecting on the coldness of Albina?

## GONDIBERT.

Her coldness!—Ha!—What then?

## EDITHA.

Nay, answer me.

Can you remember?

GON-

## GONDIBERT.

Yes, I've ne'er forgot,  
That, as he feasted once my greedy ear  
With praises of his Bride, he sudden stopp'd,  
And with a sigh—a sigh which seem'd t'escape  
From hidden stores—exclaim'd—Yet Gondibert,  
All good and beauteous as she is, not yet  
Have I inspir'd her icy heart with love.

## EDITHA.

Then hear! She is not ice. Albina's bosom  
Glow with all Nature's sympathetic fire.  
Know too, that when a Wife untouch'd appears  
By a fond Husband's tender, anxious love,  
'Tis not because she's form'd of flint or snow.  
Albina's heart was to her Husband cold,  
Because some happier youth engross'd its fire.  
Some happy Youth, unconscious of his fate,  
The Countess lov'd, and thou—yes, thou wert he.

## GONDIBERT.

'Then I am most accurst! It cannot be!  
Albina lov'd not me—or, if she did,  
Tell me, perfidious Woman!—cruel! tell me,  
Why did'st 'till now conceal the glorious secret?  
Why now reveal it?

## EDITHA.

To confirm your purpose,  
Compassion to your sorrows hath impell'd me  
Now to reveal a confidence repos'd—  
—No, not *repos'd*; to chance I owe the tale,

## GONDIBERT.

Editha! thou hast caught my list'ning soul—  
Her faculties, her every sense, she crowds  
To one; I am all ear.

## EDITHA.

Oppress'd with cares,  
As once upon a couch I had reclin'd,

To woo a short repose, Albina enter'd.  
 Tender her look, deep thought was in her eye,  
 Which pensively upon the vacant air  
 She fix'd—then turn'd it eager on the portrait,  
 Where you, a Mars, the living canvas shews;  
 And for a while, with ardent gaze, survey'd it—  
 Saying, “ Had I the pencil held, that helmet  
 Had been Love's chaplet; and the uncouth armour  
 Upon those graceful limbs, bright Hymen's flow'ry robe”.  
 I started—she espied me; and overcome  
 With shame, and sinking e'en to earth with fear,  
 Conjured me, by the love I bore her fame,  
 By all the sacred honour of our sex,  
 Ne'er to divulge—ne'er whisper to my heart,  
 'The fatal secret, which through chance was mine.

## GONDIBERT.

It is enough—she loves—Albina loves!  
 'The truth divine swift rushes on my heart,  
 And all its pow'rs confess the rapt'rous guest.  
 Thousand sweet tokens now afresh start up,  
 Darting like hidden sun-beams on my mind,  
 And make it drunk with bliss. But Edward—Edward!  
 Blind fool! to feast on shadows—*dream* of happiness,  
 Whilst one more daring boldly asks the substance,  
 And bears it from my arms—my hopes, forever!

## EDITHA.

Trust me, my Lord, if you can thwart their marriage,  
 She will again return with height'ned ardor  
 To her first love; and with sweet chidings meet  
 The tardy vows, that gave another leave  
 To ask the heart she'd fain have giv'n to thee.

## GONDIBERT.

Oh, 'tis a bribe would tempt my soul to earth,  
 If at the gates of Paradise. Thou phantom,  
 Honour! hide thy stern head; Conscience! go sleep;  
 'Till fated Love shall give thee leave to prate;  
 Then will I hear thee—wail in a friar's cowl

The precious sin, and think monastic rigours  
Too slight—too poor a penance for my joys.

EDITHA.

To 'scape Suspicion's prying eyes, we'll part.  
When night's kind shades shall wrap all mortal things  
In doubtful semblance, meet me in the garden;  
There Edward you shall see, and frame his mind  
To such conviction as I mean to give it.

GONDIBERT.

Commands like mystic oracles you give,  
Hiding in doubtful words a glorious fate.  
To thee, sweet Priestess! I resign my faith,  
Nor dare, beyond what you reveal, enquire.  
Ye hours! wear wings, 'till we shall meet again. [*Exit.*]

EDITHA.

So!——

To mould the frenzy of *despairing* love,  
Is no less easy than to wind the *jealous*.

Oh, that man——

A being form'd, as if in Nature's vanity,  
To shew how great, how exquisite her skill,  
Should be the slave of such an abject passion!  
To a mere humour those vast pow'rs should yield,  
By which he grasps Creation's mighty scheme,  
And emulates Omniscience.——

END of ACT II.

## A C T III.

S C E N E, *The Garden.**Editha seated.*

E D I T H A.

LORD Gondibert, methinks, is slow. The sun  
 Darts his last beams from the embroider'd West,  
 Pale twilight leads the pensive evening on,  
 And he's not yet arriv'd! Oh! did he feel  
 The keener jealousies Ambition gives,  
 He would outstrip a bridegroom in his haste,  
 And think each moment stretch'd into a day,  
 That lent not physic to his bosom'd grief. [*Rising.*]

A step advances!—this must sure be he.  
 O Fortune! shield me in th'approaching conflict!  
 My fate is busy; and presiding spirits  
 Now weave the hist'ry of my future life.  
 Whate'er th'events, I have a *mind* to meet them.  
 Fearless I trust my bark, at once to sink,  
 Or ride triumphant through the coming storm.

*Enter Egbert.*

E G B E R T.

Pardon me, Lady, if I have disturb'd,  
 With step unwish'd, your evening meditations!  
 But sure I may, without offence to Heaven,  
 Draw down your pious thoughts to earth awhile,  
 To minister to Virtue.

F

E D I T H A.

EDITHA.

Egbert! be brief.

EGBERT.

My tale, alas! is ting'd with shame and sorrow;  
Sorrow, that I must yield up him to shame,  
Whom to behold on Glory's pinnacle,  
All that remains to me of health and life  
I'd freely spare. I pray you now conduct me  
Strait to Lord Edward and the beauteous Countess.

EDITHA.

Lord Edward, and the Countess! Ha! say wherefore?

EGBERT.

A story to divulge, that in their ears  
Alone should be repos'd.

EDITHA.

Methinks your errand  
Wears a suspicious face; surely its purport  
With me may be entrusted.

EGBERT.

Lady, I know  
You have been long the Countess's try'd friend,  
And that no secret in her breast she locks  
From you. This then to you shall be disclos'd,  
Though of much weight, and must be chary kept.

EDITHA.

Prithee be quick.——

EGBERT.

Lord Gondibert, not bearing to behold  
The much-lov'd Widow of his Noble Brother,  
So soon forget his death, and light again  
The nuptial torch—discord resolves to shed  
Betwixt Lord Edward and his promis'd Bride;  
And to this purpose hath fram'd tales that—

EDITHA.

Ha!

EGBERT.

E G B E R T.

Start not, nor blame too deeply, gentle Lady,  
 This first, this only error of his life!  
 When time hath brush'd away the mists of passion,  
 He'll then rejoice we've fav'd him from an act  
 Which all his future days would mark with horror.

E D I T H A.

With this design did Gondibert trust *you*?

E G B E R T.

Not with the circumstance he means to urge:  
 I from disjointed converse drew his purpose.  
 Ere morning dawns he hopes to disunite  
 The noble Pair.

E D I T H A.

So!—this is then your errand?

E G B E R T.

This is my errand; to preserve their hearts  
 From fierce distraction's pangs, when they hear things  
 That else might shake their faith.

E D I T H A.

'Tis well, Old Man!

I will acquaint the Countess with your message,  
 And bring you, here, her orders. [Exit.

E G B E R T.

Gracious Heaven!

Pardon, if I do break my faith to him,  
 Whom I am bound to serve! I serve him now.  
 I drag him from a deep abyss of guilt,  
 Which all his future days, in deep remorse,  
 And acts of virtue spent, would hardly purify.  
 Repentance calls not back the deed it mourns;  
 And years of penitence will not rase out  
 The marks that sin hath graved.

*Enter Editha, with Servants.*

EDITHA.

Seize that Old Traitor,  
And instant in the deepest dungeon plunge him.  
The Countess orders this.

EGBERT.

Horror! For me?

EDITHA.

For thee; who falsely hast defam'd thy patron,  
And stain'd the honour of Lord Gondibert.  
Away! nor listen to his prayers.

EGBERT.

Oh, Lady,

Be not so cruel to my hoary years!  
Egbert did never cast a stain —

EDITHA.

'Tis false;

For thou, with rude and most unseemly speech,  
Didst paraphrase upon the deeds of him  
Whose errors should by thee be cloak'd, and screen'd  
From mortal eyes. Why stand ye loit'ring thus?  
'Tis from your Mistress these commands I bring—  
If you obey them not, 'tis at your peril.

EGBERT.

Oh! hear me! hear for the sake of him!—

*[They drag him off.]*

EDITHA.

When fools, like you, will prate, ye must be cag'd;  
Lest ye should babble to the gaping world  
Of things ye have not pow'rs to comprehend.  
To chuse that dotard for a confidant!  
Better have told the story at the mart,  
Or to the mummers, who infest our halls;  
To be by them personify'd, on eyes

**And**

And holidays. Of his imprisonment  
His Lord must not be told. Should he survive  
These days of trouble, he shall be releas'd ;  
Mean time he'll learn discretion. [Exit.

SCENE, *Another part of the Garden.*

*Enter Egbert, and Servants.*

EGBERT.

Oh, wonder not that I should move thus slow,  
Toward so sad an home!—If I might plead—

SERVANT.

Master, fear nought! thou shalt taste sleep to-night  
More sweet than hers—not in a loathsome dungeon,  
But in repose, upon thy downy couch.

EGBERT.

I thank thee; this is kind and christianly.  
I fear'd you too were leagu'd for my destruction.

SERVANT.

Didst thou then think I had forgot the hour,  
In which from my poor infant eyes you wip'd  
The streaming tears—cherish'd my grief-swoln heart,  
And plac'd me in Earl Raimond's family—  
Wherein to youth and manhood I have grown?  
Thou, then, wert my preserver—now, I'm thine.

EGBERT.

In truth, surpris and terror so dismay'd me,  
I knew you not; now that I do, I bless you.

SERVANT.

Such orders from the Countess ne'er were given;  
But proud Editha's power made it unsafe  
To thwart her. In that grotto thou may'st bide  
'Till the ev'ning grows more dark—then use this key;  
It leads you to the grove. Farewell, good Egbert!

[Exit.

EGBERT.

E G B E R T.

Farewell, my Friend!—to-morrow, better thanks  
 I will present thee—Heav'n! 'twas not thy will,  
 That I should basely perish in my duty.  
 Forgive me, that my confidence did fail,  
 And, for a moment, gave me to despair!

[*Enter the Grotto.*]*Enter Condibert and Editha.*

G O N D I B E R T.

It is beyond my hopes! 'tis a design,  
 Which sure some pitying spirit did inspire,  
 Who, once enrob'd in flesh, felt Passion's sting—  
 And, sympathetic still to human sorrows,  
 Bestow'd the vision on thy quick'ning brain!

But, how requite thee for thy gen'rous aid?  
 For me thy fame, thy welfare, thou dost hazard.

E D I T H A.

To your great Brother I indebted stand,  
 That I have now existence.—'Tis but just,  
 That I should risk for *you*, the welfare *he* bestow'd.

G O N D I B E R T.

But where is *he*—this Edward—who hath thrust  
 'Twixt me, and my felicity, his claim?  
 Though now thou'rt perch'd upon the giddy wheel,  
 And thank'st thy fate for such a glorious stand,  
 Edward, beware! for I will have thee down,  
 Though thou dost crush me in thy fall! Where *is* he?

E D I T H A.

With Raimond; rioting, perchance, his fancy  
 On the bright prospect of to-morrow's blessings.

G O N D I B E R T.

Ne'er shall that morrow come—or, if it doth,  
 The coursing sun, that lights them to the altar,  
 Shall finish his diurnal round in blood.

E D I T H A.

EDITHA.

Try bloodless means—give circumstance and proof.

GONDIBERT.

Aye, stunning proof; such as would shake a faith  
 Grav'd on the heart, ere its first pulses beat.  
 No *tale*, though varnish'd with the deepest skill,  
 No *circumstance*, though guided by the hand  
 Of art, can shade, or for a moment throw  
 The slightest cloud on Countess Raimond's fame.  
 But demonstration—demonstration, speaking  
 To his gross sense! that, Edward! *that*, shall force thee  
 To curse the paragon of Nature's works,  
 And yield thee to thy raptur'd Rival's arms.

EDITHA.

Yet tale and circumstance will have their weight;  
 They'll mould his mind for the *broad proof*; which else,  
 Like arrows striking 'gainst a marble rock,  
 Will shiver, or rebound. I go to watch  
 When he retires, and to direct him hither.  
 Before you mark each motion of his heart;  
 Catch ev'ry passion on a barbed hook,  
 And torture him, 'till he, with agony,  
 Shall hate her!—

GONDIBERT.

The fierce transports of his rage  
 May prompt him on the instant to accuse her.

EDITHA.

To counteract his transports be my care.  
 This lab'ring head, my Lord! hath not *so* fram'd  
 The close design, for blund'ring chance to mar.  
 May we depend upon your servants faith?

GONDIBERT.

They are devoted to my will.

EDITHA.

Enough!

The dress prepar'd you'll find within my closet;

The

The antichamber enter, at the signal,  
And instantly the private stairs descend —  
—The rest, kind Fortune to our wishes guide !

[*Exit.*

GONDIBERT.

Painful the race ! but Raimond is the prize !  
Ye Beings ! who, superior to humanity,  
Behold, with supercilious eye, our slidings ;  
Oh, blame not me, *thus* tempted, if I yield.  
Not Man, but thriftless Nature, be accus'd,  
Who to seductions left our minds a prey—  
—Nay more, who doth herself ensnare us ;  
Hath hung us round with senses exquisite,  
Hath planted in our hearts *resistless* passions,  
The first to weaken, and the last to war  
On poor, defenceless, naked Virtue !  
How dark the night ! The moon hath hid her head,  
As scorning with her lucid beams to gild  
This murky business. Thro' umbrageous trees  
The whistling Eurus speaks, in hollow murmurs ;  
And dismal fancy, in yon shadowy ailes,  
Might conjure up an hundred phantoms.  
How strong th'impression of our dawning years !  
The tales of sprites and goblins, that did awe  
My infancy, all rush upon my mind,  
And, spite of haughty reason, make it shrink.  
Who is't approaches ?

[*Enter Edward.*

EDWARD.

Edward.

GONDIBERT.

Gondibert.

EDWARD.

What means this summons, at so late an hour ?  
I sought you here—sent by the fair Editha,  
For the relation of important secrets,  
Which to my private ear you mean t'intrust.

GON.

## GONDIBERT.

Could I intrust them, Edward, to your ear,  
Without the poison of the words I utter  
Distilling to your heart, I would with boldness  
Speak them——

## EDWARD.

Surely a tale thus guarded, and hemm'd in  
With words so circumspect, must have much weight;  
But heavy matters suit not hours like these;  
My soul, now banqueting on its felicity,  
And all her faculties absorb'd in bliss,  
Looks down from an exalted height, and scorns  
So low a thought as care—Farewel, my Lord!  
You'll be our guest to-morrow—welcome guest,  
Upon the happiest morn old Time e'er brought  
To supplicating man. [Going.

## GONDIBERT.

I charge thee, stay—thou arrogant of bliss,  
My tale perhaps may end in guest *forbidding*,  
In the postponing th'hymeneal feast.

## EDWARD.

Sayst thou! postponing th'hymeneal feast?  
By heav'n, in the wide circle of events  
That possibility may teem with, one  
Shall not be found, to make me for a day  
Suspend the bliss of calling Raimond mine!

## GONDIBERT.

Blind and presumptuous!——  
The passing air hath borne away thy vow,  
And in its track thy recantation follows.  
Edward! Albina never can be thine.  
Amazement sits upon thy brow; I swear  
That, had the Countess kept her single state,  
My ever-cautious tongue had ne'er divulg'd  
What it must now reveal—But on the edge

Of sudden ruin, Edward! I behold thee,  
And now extend my arm to snatch thee from it.

EDWARD.

Thy words have form'd a chaos in my soul;  
Something there lurks beneath their doubtful phrase,  
I dread to hear—yet *ask* thee to unfold.

GONDIBERT.

Then steel your mind, to bear the story's horror,  
Call up your fortitude—

EDWARD.

Thou tortur'st me—speak it!

GONDIBERT.

The Widow of my Brother—is a Woman—  
*Mere* Woman—*weak* Woman; of mould so tender,  
It can't resist a Lover's melting plea—  
Nor bear so harsh a charge as cruelty.

EDWARD.

Do I not know that she is tender? soft  
As dreams of cradled infancy, or note  
Of Philomel—whose music in the ear  
Of the benighted traveller, makes beams  
Of roseate morn unwelcome to his eye.  
Why then to me mysteriously descant  
Upon her gentleness?

GONDIBERT.

'Cause more than thee,  
Her gentleness with healing pity views;  
And to benighted *Lovers*, makes the beams  
Of roseate morn unwelcome.

EDWARD.

Villain, thou liest! [*Drawing.*

GONDIBERT.

Come, come, this female rage ill suits a soldier.

EDWARD.

Ill suits thy blasphemy, base Coward!

GON-

GONDIBERT.

Coward!—

Edward, thou dar'st not, *shalt* not, think me Coward.

EDWARD.

Then guard thee, or I'll write it in thy heart!

GONDIBERT.

Hah! come on then, plunge in thy weapon deep;  
Before take heed thou dost not miss the spot,  
Where ill-judg'd friendship, in that heart, for Edward,  
Tranform'd him into Gondibert's assassin.

EDWARD.

Oh!—

GONDIBERT.

Shrink not; appease your anger with my blood;  
Then to Albina, boast of having slain  
The man who had unveil'd her to your eyes.  
She'll fawn upon thee—cozen thee—and gull thee,  
With the fond vows that have in *other* ears  
Shed their sweet poison.

EDWARD.

Should my Father's spirit  
From heav'n descend, t'abet thee in this tale,  
I'd swear it ly'd.

GONDIBERT.

Nay then, I crave your pardon!  
Think it rank falsehood—phantom of my brain;  
Raimond was guil'd when he believ'd her naught.  
Good-night, my Lord, [Going.

EDWARD.

Hold! O stay, Gondibert!  
Why, what a frame is mine to shake thus! *Raimond*  
Didst say?

GONDIBERT.

Yes—Raimond. But I see too well  
You can't support it. Prithee ask no more.

EDWARD.

E D W A R D.

Nay, but I *will* ask, though each word you utter  
 Steals like a chilly poison through my veins,  
 And binds my blood in frost. Say, did your Brother—  
 Oh, answer—answer me!—I cannot speak it.

G O N D I B E R T.

He did; my Brother oft hath call'd her—wanton,  
 And, in the anguish of his soul, hath curs'd her.  
 The Roman Julia, he would say, to her  
 Was chaste, whose loose desires——

E D W A R D.

Now thou *dost* lye.

By Heaven, such purity was never dress'd  
 In frail mortality. Her govern'd passions  
 Are the soft zephyrs of a vernal morn,  
 That breathe their perfume on the blushing rose.

G O N D I B E R T.

The zephyrs of a vernal morn may swell  
 To hurricanes—Such undiscerning tumults  
 Her passions know—This piece of pure mortality!

E D W A R D.

Draw, villain!——  
 Or I will plunge my dagger in thy throat,  
 And bear thy lying tongue upon its point.

*Enter* Editha.

E D I T H A.

What horrid noise breaks through the sober night?  
 Shield me!—A naked sword!

G O N D I B E R T.

You'll not fight

Before a Lady, Sir!—I'th'morning meet me—  
 Meet me, before the hour the Priest expects thee;  
 That, at the altar, when thou'lt eager join

Thy

Thy chiding Bride, thou may'st atonement make ;  
And, with the marriage-ring, present the heart—  
His bleeding heart, who, with ungentle truths,  
To rob her of her Husband—vainly strove. [Exit.

EDWARD.

Perdition catch thy breath !——  
Knew you, Editha, when you sent me hither,  
The purport of that villain's tale ?

EDITHA.

Your looks  
Affright me so, my Lord ! Pray sheathe your dagger !  
Fain, fain would I escape this dreadful task !  
My duty to the Countess binds my tongue—  
Excuse me then, my Lord.

EDWARD.

I charge thee speak !  
By all the friendship which I bear to thee,  
By thy own high regard to truth and honour,  
I charge thee, spare me not—tell all, tell all !

EDITHA.

Then I confess me privy to the counsel,  
Which Gondibert, to you, design'd to offer ;  
And for your honour 'twere, that you should heed it.

EDWARD.

Again thou bring'st me back to all my horror.  
Dost *thou* say this, Editha ! thou, who know'st  
Each secret winding of her heart !

EDITHA.

I do !—  
And what I've said, I'll back with proof.

EDWARD.

What proof !

EDITHA.

That if you wed her, you will be undone ;  
That you will only share Albina's love.

Unfair

Unfair she deems it, having sov'reign beauty,  
 To scant its blessings to a *single* object ;  
 Like the universal sun, she sheds her glories—  
 —Beaming impartially on all mankind.

EDWARD.

Vile slanderer ! yet hold. There have been women,  
 Whose bosoms with licentious hell have burn'd ;  
 But these were monstrous, and of actions horrible !  
 These did not wear the hallow'd looks of virtue—  
 The soul of chasteness breath'd not in their words :  
 Were Raimond, then, like those——

EDITHA.

Hah, my good Lord !

You know not our deceitful, dang'rous sex !  
 Those minds imbued by vice, with deepest stains,  
 Are often mask'd in forms almost divine—  
 Deck'd forth in words, and looks, that Virtue's self  
 Might challenge for her own. Such is Albina ;  
 Such did Albina to her Lord appear :  
 What cause, save that, sent him to Palestine ?  
 Why went he there, for honourable death,  
 But that *her* faults did surfeit him of life ?

EDWARD.

If this is truth, oh, Truth, be thou accurst !—  
 —Falsehood's from Heaven—Deceit ! wrap me again  
 In thick impervious folds ! Thou busy wretch !  
 Why rouse me from a lethargy of bliss ?  
 Yet I'll have *truth*—if thou hast proof, present it ;  
 If not, fly swifter than the lightning's fork,  
 Lest, like the lightning, I transfix thee ! Oh no.  
 Swear thou art false, I'll twist thee round my heart-  
 strings.

EDITHA.

I will abide the proof. Know that a youth,  
 Of birth obscure—in mien, a bright Adonis,

Hath,

Hath long possess'd Albina's secret hours—  
 —That these last hours, she will devote to him,  
 And in her chamber you shall see him lodg'd,  
 When she retires to rest.——

EDWARD.

Nay, now thou weigh'st me down. Oh! oh!

EDITHA.

If it o'ercomes you thus, my Lord, go home.

EDWARD.

Home! I'll go howl in deserts with the wolves,  
 Forsake society, curse human kind,  
 But chiefly woman.

EDITHA.

Nay, come with me, my Lord,  
 I'll lead you to the hall, where you'll observe  
 The doings of our house.

EDWARD.

Thou art a fiend,  
 And tempting me to hell.

EDITHA.

Nay then.

EDWARD.

Oh, pardon me!  
 Conduct me to my woe. [Exeunt.

*Enter* Egbert.

EGBERT.

Go, senseless lamb,  
 And meet the sanguine knife. Oh, merciful!  
 And is't a *Woman* I have seen? Woman!  
 On whom thou hast bestow'd Nature's best feelings,  
 With nerves of finest tone, to catch each woe,  
 And strike it on the heart! Oh, I'm ashamed  
 That I stand kindred, in creation's scale,

With

With such a being ! Haply am I witness  
 To the base league. Now in the toils, Editha,  
 Which thou didst spread for me, thyself art fallen.  
 Thus Heaven doth punish with our own acts,  
 And makes our crimes our woe.

SCENE, *A Hall, with a Stair-case, and Gallery.*

*Enter Edward and Editha from the Garden.*

EDITHA.

Stand here, my Lord. The hour is now arriv'd  
 In which the Countess usually retires.  
 Yet, oh, be patient ! and I pray behold  
 With fortitude this sample of her faith,  
 Which I, alas ! unwillingly disclose. [Exit.

EDWARD.

Now Heaven !——I cannot pray——My sinking heart  
 Scarce yields me life to breathe ; and dizzy images  
 Before my eyes swim in imperfect shape ;  
 She comes !——  
 Behold her, Slander !——and withdraw thy shaft.  
 Her chastity is evident as truth ;  
 It glows, it animates each speaking line  
 Of her enchanting face.——

*Enter Albina, Editha, and Attendants.*

EDITHA.

Shall I attend you, Madam, to your chamber ?

ALBINA.

Not now, Editha, for you need repose.  
 Your pensive mind hath suffer'd much since morn,  
 From the sad image of long past afflictions :  
 Forget them now, and may sweet sleep attend you !  
[Albina ascends the Stairs, and enters her Apartment.]

EDWARD.

EDWARD.

There's the rich temple that conceals my Love :  
 If *she* be naught, Nature's in league with Vice,  
 And pour'd on Raimond such a waste of charms,  
 To draw from fainted Virtue her disciples.

[*Attendants leave the Apartment.*]

Silence prevails——

Oh, on this spot I will with patience count  
 The lagging moments of the night, to triumph  
 In the sure failure of their promis'd proof.  
 Hah!—hark! methought there was a noise. Alas!  
 The clicking death-watch, or the passing air,  
 Hath now a sound to freeze me. [*A Pause.*]  
 [Gondibert enters at one End of the Gallery, and goes into  
 the Chamber.]

Hah! stay, villain; stay!

Editha enters, and flings herself before the Stairs.

EDITHA.

Ah, cease! cease, my Lord—you will undo me!

EDWARD.

I am undone—but I will drag the villain—  
 I'll tear him from her arms.

[*Enter Servants of Gondibert.*]

EDITHA.

Help me—assist me!

Oh! drag him from the spot. Nay, go, my Lord!  
 Why wilt inhumanly destroy Editha?

[*They force him off, Editha following.*]

'Tis finish'd!——

The lion's caught, and struggles in his toils, in vain.

END OF ACT III.

H

ACT

## A C T IV.

SCENE, *An Apartment in Westmoreland's Palace.*

*Enter a Steward, with Servants.*

STEWARD.

**H**ASTE to Paul's Cross, and be you sure, at seven,  
The fountain spouts with wine—spouts in full streams,  
As copious as the Noble Donor's bounty.  
Observe, when weak, or aged folk you see,  
Press'd by the boist'rous multitude, assist them,  
And let not sturdy ones take double shares.

FIRST SERVANT.

I will be mindful.—

[*Exit.*]

STEWARD.

You, Edric, for the populace, take care  
The ox hath been well fed. Let not the poor  
Dine on poor food, for a rememb'ring token  
Of this most happy day.

SECOND SERVANT.

I'll chuse the best. [*Exit.*]

STEWARD.

Have the old pensioners receiv'd their raiment?

THIRD SERVANT.

Marry they have, and with o'erflowing hearts.

STEWARD.

'Tis thus our Noble Master doth rejoice!  
What'e'r brings joy, or happines to him,

Is pledge of joy to all within his reach.  
 Were his lands bounded only by the seas  
 That girt our isle, he hath a heart as wide.  
 See, he approaches! with a face as gladsome,  
 As though he had redeem'd from glutton Time  
 His own blest nuptial morn.

*Enter Westmoreland.*

WESTMORELAND.

Come, come; no mirth,  
 No bustling with ye? Are the cooks all busy?  
 Is the hall trimm'd, and ready for the guests?

STEWARD.

All's as you wish, my Lord.

WESTMORELAND.

Then *all* will feel content this happy morn,  
 And the dejected eye of sorrow  
 Be rais'd, with sparkling gratitude, to Heaven.  
 But where's *thy* joy? Thou art as old and grey  
 As if this only was a *common* morn.  
 Is't not Albina's wedding-day? Cast off  
 Thy age, and be a boy! Not sportive youth  
 Shall go beyond old Westmoreland to-day  
 In all the rounds of gay festivity.

STEWARD.

My heart doth take its part, my honour'd Lord,  
 In all the happiness that beams around you.  
 Behold the sov'reign of the feast—Lord Edward!

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Edward.*

WESTMORELAND.

Hail to my son! Hail to this chosen morn—  
 This morn of bliss! These are a Bridegroom's hours:  
 —Thou seem'st impatient of the lazy clock.

H 2

EDWARD.

EDWARD.

Sorrow, like joy, 's impatient of the hours,  
And presses forward to untasted time.

WESTMORELAND.

Who talks of sorrow on a bridal morn?  
Your tones, methinks, ill suit the occasion.

EDWARD.

They suit too well the tenor of my mind!  
Edward, alas! thou seest, no happy Bridegroom,  
With ardor waiting, and impatient joy,  
To hail his blushing Bride—but a sad wretch,  
Who hates the day, for breaking on his woe,  
And longs for endless night.

WESTMORELAND.

Surely my joy  
Hath been too powerful for my frail age.  
Thy words do strike mine ear; but Reason  
Her faculty with-holds, nor shews their import.

EDWARD.

Oh, look not thus! My tale will rive thy heart.

WESTMORELAND.

Albina!—my Child!

EDWARD.

Dread the worst;  
That when the worst doth come, you may support  
Its horror!

WESTMORELAND.

Speak quickly—Is my Child well?

EDWARD.

She is.

WESTMORELAND.

Then what keen stroke hath Heaven in store?  
Through her alone I can affliction know—  
If she be well, what ill can light on me?

EDWARD.

Oh!

WEST-

WESTMORELAND.

I prithee speak—what labours in thy breast?

EDWARD.

A deadly poison!—I can hold no longer—  
Last night—oh, last night!

WESTMORELAND.

Hah! *what* of last night?

[*Impatiently.*]

EDWARD.

Memory! thou'rt a scorpion. To forget!  
'Twere easier to blot out the horrid'st crimes.  
The wrath of Heav'n's by penitence appeas'd.  
But *what*, O Memory! can rase from thee  
The ills that thou hast register'd? Albina!  
My heart its vital stream should yield, to expiate  
Thy guilt.

WESTMORELAND.

Guilt! Dost thou join her name with guilt?

EDWARD.

Yes; with most foul dishonour—blackest guilt!

WESTMORELAND.

*Thou*, then, art he—the villain who hast stain'd her;  
And, by the Cross, thou shalt repair her shame;  
Wed her this day—make her this hour thy Wife,  
And then I'll poniard thee, for having dared  
*Think* lewdly of her.

EDWARD.

Thy rage I do respect;  
And, whilst my heart with agony is torn,  
I pity thee. Unhappy Westmoreland!  
Albina had been chaste as cloister'd saints,  
Had all, like me, believ'd her honour sacred.

WESTMORELAND.

What! with another—another! Dost accuse her?

EDWARD.

E D W A R D.

I do!—Last night—oh!—I will find the villain,  
If Earth doth not conceal him in her womb,  
Or Heav'n work miracles to save him—

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

He is already found. Thy thin-drawn arts  
Leave thee expos'd, in all thy native guilt.  
Thou'st ta'en advantage of relying Love—  
—On one base hazard, stak'd a boundless treasure,  
And now art Bankrupt, both of bliss and honour.  
This wretch art thou, or a most foul deceiver!

E D W A R D.

This rude, intemp'rate anger, will not heal  
Thy Daughter's shame. I tell thee, thou fierce Lord!  
These eyes beheld him hous'd, within her chamber,  
At th' hour when Virtue and Suspicion sleep,  
And Lewdness riots in the mask of Night.

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Whom sayst thou, thou beheld'st?

E D W A R D.

I knew him not.

Wrapt in Night's footy liv'ry, like hot Tarquin  
To the fair Roman's bed, He softly stole—  
—But, oh! he was not greeted like a Ravisher.—

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Cease!—cease thy impious, thy licentious tongue!  
Its venom thou shalt purify. Nay, mark me!  
Tho' thou hast been deceiv'd; and tho', to guile thee,  
Each art that wickedness could frame, were practis'd;  
On thee alone my chastisement should fall.  
Thou should'st have question'd ev'ry testimony;  
Doubted each sense; and, though they all combin'd,  
Contemn'd them all—ere thou had'st dared to cast  
On Chastity the stains that, once infix'd,  
Are never purg'd away.

Thou

'Thou art the slanderer of my widow'd Daughter;  
Her Husband dead, her Father is her Champion—  
—I dare thee to the field—

EDWARD.

And I refuse

Thy daring challenge—weak, yet good, old Earl!  
What! prove Albina in the face of day  
A wanton!—Her, on whose pure chastity,  
Within a few short hours, I would have stak'd  
My everlasting weal!—Oh, thou fallen Angel!  
I'll mourn thy fault, but in my heart 'tis buried!

WESTMORELAND.

All this might cozen a fond female's anger;  
But, Edward! I am Westmoreland!—  
In our long line of noble ancestry,  
Not one base act e'er spotted the fair name,  
Or slander dared to breathe on't!  
Unfulfilled I receiv'd the glorious heritage,  
And will, untarnish'd, bear it through the world.  
Thou hast defam'd my child—Her who will bear  
The name, and princely fortunes, of our house—  
—Thy blood must do away the damning stain!

EDWARD.

Would'st thou oppose thy waning life to mine?  
Thou dost forget, old Lord! how many Winters  
Have left their hoary fleeces on thy head,  
Since thou wert a fit match for one who boasts  
Th' unslacken'd nerves of youth.

WESTMORELAND.

Thy vaunted strength

I do despise. Was e'er the nerved arm  
Of Youth triumphant on the side of falsehood?  
This wither'd arm, in my Albina's cause,  
Shall cover with disgrace the budding laurels  
That scarcely yet are fitted to thy brow.

EDWARD.

E D W A R D.

Disgrac'd indeed ! if spotted with thy blood ;  
 And *therefore* I refuse thy proffer'd gauntlet.  
 If 'tis my life you seek, I shall, this day,  
 For Palestine embark, and die more gloriously  
 Than by a froward old Man's petulance.

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Insolent Boy ! I'll force thee do me right.  
 I'll instant to our Sov'reign, and demand  
 The law of honour. Ere thou dost embark,  
 Thou sure shalt prove my Daughter what thou said'st,  
 And leave these wintry locks drench'd in my blood—  
 —Or I will write thee *lyar*, in thy heart. [Exit.

E D W A R D.

Is this my bridal morn ?——  
 Oh, ye soft budding joys !—ye tender sympathies !—  
 —Ye offices of Love !—ye thousand nameless ties !  
 Where are ye fled ?——  
 The Sun of Happiness, that blaz'd but yesterday,  
 And promis'd through Eternity to light me—  
 Is extinguish'd !——  
 Then, Life, be thou extinguish'd too ; but not  
 Ingloriously—To Holy Land I'll speed,  
 And bear me as a Soldier. Oh, Albina !  
 The sword that must be buried in my heart,  
 Thy hand will strike—A Saracen may wound—  
 —'Tis Raimond kills. [Exit.

*Enter Westmoreland, leading Albina.*

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Ha, my poor Child ! home—thou must home again.  
 Put off thy bridal vest, resume thy weeds,  
 For thou must be a Widow still.

A L B I N A.

My Lord !

W E S T-

WESTMORELAND.

Why, why didst yield to thy weak Father's suit?  
He pleaded for a Villain.

ALBINA.

For a Villain!

What mean those dreadful sounds? Edward a Villain!

WESTMORELAND.

He is. Thou too shalt think him so.

ALBINA.

Impossible!

Lord Edward's breast is Honour's sacred temple!  
In him, 'tis not a scope of moral words,  
Or schoolmen's speeches—but a *living soul*  
That starts from baseness, as annihilation.

WESTMORELAND.

Alas! my Child, I judge him from himself.  
How shall I tell thee—

ALBINA.

What?

WESTMORELAND.

Thou art—rejected.

Yes, he rejects thee. Nay, he hath accused—  
Westmoreland lives to hear his child accused—

ALBINA.

Support, me Heaven! Of what am I accused?

WESTMORELAND.

The shame will burn thy modest cheek—he terms thee—  
wanton.

ALBINA.

Me! Edward deem me—Oh!

WESTMORELAND.

Yes, thee!

Thee, in whose bosom Chastity is thron'd:  
Thou, the bright pattern of each female virtue,  
By Edward art accus'd of vile licentiousness.

I

Oh,

A L B I N A.

Oh, horrible! [*Sinking into her Father's arms.*]

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Support thyself, my Child!

On thy base slanderer thou shalt have justice.

A L B I N A.

Last night, I well remember, when he left me,  
 And pass'd beyond the reach of tender sounds,  
 Straining his eyes, he stopt—then towards Heaven,  
 With emphasis of action, rais'd his hands,  
 Seeming t'invoke its blessings on Albina—  
 Had he conceiv'd a doubt—

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

He *has* no doubt—

He dares not doubt the honour of my Daughter—  
 But the rich prize, which, whilst at distance, plac'd  
 Almost beyond the stretches of his hope,  
 Seem'd worthy his ambition to attain—  
 Now, view'd at hand, palls on his sickly taste,  
 And he contemns the blessing he aspir'd to.

A L B I N A.

Oh! is't for this I rose with early dawn  
 To bless perfidious Edward? Is't for this  
 I gave consent, ere custom might allow,  
 To be again a Bride? Base, base ingratitude!

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Take heart, my Girl! thy Father swears thy innocence  
 Shall not be wrong'd.

A L B I N A.

Ah! what avails my innocence?

My lot is wretchedness. Condemn'd by him  
 To whom I'd giv'n my heart—and in whose love  
 I'd treasur'd ages of untasted bliss—  
 Forsaken! scorn'd! left like a loath'd disease!

Oh,

Oh, to some convent's dreary cell I'll fly,  
And there forever hide my shame, and misery!

WESTMORELAND.

First shall be sacrific'd a thousand Edwards;  
Thy virtue shall be prov'd; and my Albina  
Live through a race of blissful years, in honour:  
E'en now I hasten to the King, to claim  
The sacred rights of Knighthood.

ALBINA.

Hah! what say you,

My Lord!

WESTMORELAND.

Edward I've challeng'd to the lists;  
There to give testimony, that thy virtue  
Is spotless, is unquestion'd as thy beauty.

ALBINA.

What do I hear? My Father yield his breast  
To Edward's sword! Edward! whose skill in arms  
Leaves him unrivall'd in the voice of Fame!  
Oh, shield me from the horror of the thought!

WESTMORELAND.

Dismiss thy fears. Thy Father's arm hath humbled  
Mightier men than he. This breast wears marks—  
—Honourable marks, grav'd by the sword of heroes;  
And shall a Boy with contumely use me?

ALBINA.

Horror! distraction! Oh, [*kneeling*] if my soul's peace  
Be dear to thee, avoid this cruel combat.  
My mighty wrongs I will with patience bear;  
But, Father! *heap* not sorrows on my head—  
Risk not such precious lives! Whoe'er doth vanquish,  
Makes me the wretched victim of his prowess!

WESTMORELAND.

Dost Edward's life, beyond thine honour, prize?

ALBINA.

A L B I N A.

Oh, frown not thus ! I'll tear him from my heart ;  
 I'll shun him, as I would the haunts of vice—  
 —But, oh ! make not thy Child a Murderer !  
 A Paricide !

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Thy innocence insures  
 Thy Father's life. In chaste Gunhilda's cause  
 A stripling triumph'd o'er a mighty giant,  
 Who seem'd the Atlas of a trembling world ;  
 Thus arm'd by thee, I'd dauntless meet a legion.

A L B I N A.

Canst thou demand a miracle to save thee !  
 As Man thou'lt perish—oh ! or should, indeed,  
 A miracle be wrought to prove my truth,  
 Then Edward dies !

W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Ah ! could'st thou wish thy slanderer—  
 Thy fame's assassin, to survive his crime ;  
 I would disclaim thee. Shall the child of Westmoreland—  
 She, who doth carry in her veins the blood  
 Of royal houses—whose high Ancestors  
 Gave honour to the sceptres which they bore—  
 —Shall she, when thus accus'd, be unreveng'd ?  
 No more, no more—lest I think thy chaste Mother  
 Did play the wanton, and gave me the daughter  
 Of some ignoble hind.

A L B I N A.

Wound me not thus !  
 My fainted Mother, from thy blest abode,  
 Look with compassion on thy wretched Child !  
 Sustain me, help me, in this trying hour,  
 Lest horror should uproot my tott'ring reason,  
 And instant plunge me in the depths of madness !

W E S T.

WESTMORELAND.

This keen, tumultuous sorrow misbecomes thee ;  
It misbecomes thy *rank*, thy *wrongs*, thy *virtue* :  
Recall thy fortitude ; think what thou art,  
And prove thee worthy of the space thou fill'st !

A L B I N A.

Oh Father ! Heaven ! where shall I turn for succour ?  
A Father steels his heart, and Heaven forsakes me.  
All things are wild—'Tis surely Nature's wreck !—  
—These fierce contending struggles are too big,  
They'll burst the little mansion that confines 'em,  
And I shall feel—shall agonize no more. [Exit.

WESTMORELAND.

Oh Honour ! Nature ! how shall I decide ?  
Obeying one, I may destroy my Child,  
And yielding to the other's powerful claims,  
I give her up to shame. Must I do this ?  
Thy Father yield thee to dishonour ! No.  
First I'll purge off the venom of black Slander,  
Restore its wonted lustre to thy fame ;  
Then, if thou diest—sink with thee to the grave.

SCENE, *An Apartment in Gondibert's Palace.*

*Enter Gondibert.*

GONDIBERT,

O Day ! with heart appall'd I meet thy beams.  
Thou racking conscience ! wherefore torture thus  
The breast where thou hast lightly reign'd till now ?  
A sleepless night I've past—Or, if perchance  
A slumber for a moment clos'd mine eyes,  
Sad images of woe convey'd such horror,  
That better 'twere to wake to *real* misery.  
And whence these new-born torments ? What ! have I  
Depriv'd the weeping Orphan of his bread ?  
Imbrued my hands in murder ? Or look'd down,  
With

With chilly eye, upon a bosom friend,  
 Beneath Oppression's iron gripe? Oh, no.  
 I've been a child, and *ly'd* to keep a toy  
 Of which another would have robb'd me.—  
 I'm even less than Woman—Not a Female  
 Who would not laugh at such o'er strain'd nice feelings,  
 For crimes 'mongst Lovers put in daily practice.  
 Hah! my bright Genius!— [Enter Editha.  
 That smile must be the herald of good news;  
 Misfortune ne'er was couch'd beneath an air so sweet.

EDITHA.

There spoke thy cox'ning sex. Deceit and flattery  
 Hang all their witchery upon your tongues;  
 Whilst Maidens, like poor birds, by keen-ey'd basilisks  
 Allured, behold their danger, yet are *charm'd*  
 To their destruction.

GONDIBERT.

Talk not of Man;  
 But sov'reign Woman—Tidings of Albina!

EDITHA.

Array'd in bridal pomp, light in her steps,  
 Joy beaming from her eye, and happiness  
 Exulting on her brow, she left the palace;  
 But soon return'd—a truly mournful Widow.

GONDIBERT.

Be quick.—

EDITHA.

Edward, in perfect faith of last night's guile,  
 Relinquishes his willing Bride—Returns her back  
 To lonely Widowhood, or the soft cares  
 Of some more happy Lover.

GONDIBERT.

Oh, be that Lover me!  
 Strait will I hasten to the charming Mourner—  
 Help her to curse perfidious, changing Man—

Damn

Damn my whole sex to gratify her spleen—  
And, when her hatred to a frenzy mounts,  
Seize on the instant of tumultuous passion,  
To lure her back again to Love and Gondibert.

EDITHA.

Hold, hold, my Lord! such rashness would undo us.  
Beware of proud vindictive Westmoreland!  
A single glance to his suspicious eye,  
Would be a clue to ravel out our secret.  
He hath a faculty to see men's souls,  
As though their lineaments were written characters,  
By which he reads their scarce-existing thoughts—  
Fly from the danger, then, if you are wise.

GONDIBERT.

Seek Wisdom in the squalid Monks' abode,  
Where lean and fallow, by the mould'ring lamp  
She grows—In me the passions are wound up  
To Nature's highest pitch—impulse, my law;  
That impulse leads to Raimond. *[Still going.]*

EDITHA.

Still I must  
Restrain you. I will home, my Lord, to watch  
The motions of our house, and give you tidings  
When ev'ry danger's past. Thou call'st me Friend,  
Yet wilt not trust to my sollicitudes.

GONDIBERT.

Nay then, I yield—farewell, my Guardian Spirit—  
Oh, count the moments by the Lover's dial,  
Where hours are ages!—

EDITHA.

Till he doth backward on the dial count,  
Then ages shrink to points. *[Exit.]*

GONDIBERT.

Now then, for Edward,  
And for art! art, to hide my doating thoughts,  
And

And deck 'em in the fullen guise of hatred.  
 Only a few short hours these shores confine him;  
 —These shores may never greet his eyes again.  
 Mean time, that he and his Albina meet not  
 T'exchange reproaches, is my only care:  
 That point attain'd—and all the rest is rapture.

[*Going.*]

*Enter Egbert.*

E G B E R T.

I come, my Lord, th'unwilling Messenger  
 Of heavy tidings. Hoary Earl Westmoreland  
 Hath challeng'd Edward, in the field to prove  
 His calumny against his Daughter.

G O N D I B E R T.

Confusion!

E G B E R T.

This day they enter on the solemn trial.  
 The King himself will judge the dreadful combat;  
 And the whole court, in wond'ring sorrow wrapt,  
 E'en now are hast'ning to attend the issue.

G O N D I B E R T.

*Issue!* 'tis well—'tis well. Leave me, good Egbert!  
 Oh! 'tis too much—this is too keen a stroke!  
 How shall I steer me in this fatal tempest?  
 Confess my wiles?—Horror! leave me, I say—  
 Why stand'st thou thus, with such exploring eyes,  
 As if thou'dst read the workings of my brain?

E G B E R T.

If right I read, your mind in balance hangs  
 'Twixt the opposing principles of good  
 And ill. Between these two the Pow'r that made us,  
 Bestow'd free-will to chuse: Oh, let me then  
 Direct your choice! Let him, whose tongue inspir'd  
 The early love of virtue, once more—

G O N.

GONDIBERT.

Canst thou  
Preach calmness to the furious sea? Wilt bid  
The whirlwind, that doth break the tow'ring spire,  
And in its vortex hurls the forest oaks,  
Restrain its rage?—When *they* obey thee,  
Then Gondibert shall be again a child,  
And take instructions from the *virtuous* Egbert.

EGBERT.

Oh, that these hours had not so sudden past!  
I can recall, when this despis'd Old Man  
Was *dear* to you—when, hanging on my neck,  
You'd listen to——

GONDIBERT.

No more! I do still love thee,  
Still reverence thy virtues—But oh, Egbert!  
I see them as the humid arch of Heaven,  
That distant, in bright order glows, and beautifies  
The scene—yet doth impart to Man no influence,  
Nor yields him more than empty splendor.

EGBERT.

Thus do Men talk, who'd rather shine in words,  
Than seek for truth. But, oh, my Lord! this once  
Let me resume my wonted place. This hour—

GONDIBERT.

Hie to thy chamber, Egbert, and make prayers.  
Such holy Men as thou art, have no call  
In these rude times. The world is headstrong grown,  
And needs a firmer curb than thine to guide it.

EGBERT.

Since only one way I can gain your ear,  
Know, thou rash Lord! I'm privy to the plot—  
Th' inhuman plot by female cunning fram'd,  
In which you have most wickedly concurr'd.

K

GON-

GONDIBERT.

Hah!—how—when?

EGBERT.

I was a hidden witness of the scene  
 'That pass'd, last night, within Albina's garden—  
 —How I came there, will make another tale.

GONDIBERT.

That thou wert there, thou prying, list'ning Varlet,  
 Is thy destruction— [Half-drawing.  
 Yet hold—fly me, whilst I command my rage—  
 —Fly from thy wrong'd Master, into whose secrets  
 Thou hast, indecent! forced thyself.

EGBERT.

I fear not

Your anger, Lord!—nay, I will gladly die,  
 If, dying, on your mind I can impress  
 Just horror for the—

GONDIBERT.

Pedagogue! cease prating;  
 And know a duty thou hast yet to learn—  
 To treat the slidings of thy Betters with respect;  
 Nor dare to comment on the will of those,  
 Who, seen by thee from such a tow'ring distance,  
 Should make thee jealous of thy own discerning,  
 And keep thy rude, presumptuous judgement down.  
 Go—begone!— [Pushing him off.]

What curst, untoward chance, made him a witness?  
 No matter—keener sorrows now surround me.  
 Oh, Westmoreland! why must I tear the pillow,  
 Thus cruel, from thy time-blanch'd head?—Why  
 drag thee

From age's soft repose, to give thy bosom  
 'To the inhuman spear? No—perish first.  
 I'll go, and to the King relate the crimes  
 'To which a furious passion drove a wretch,

Who

Who saw the only treasure of his soul  
Torn from his grasp—to bless the Man he hates.

[*Going.*

What! and thus mark—thus stamp myself a villain,  
To aid the transports of triumphant Edward?  
Oh! 'twere a suicide that Honour claims not,  
That Nature would abhor. What then?  
Oh! guide me, Heaven! or, instruct me, Hell!  
I can't recede; and, to go on, is horror.  
In what a sea of crimes hath one short day  
Immers'd me! Vice, oh, thou fierce whirling eddy—  
Touch but the outmost circle of thy ring,  
Thy strong, resistless current, drags us in;  
Torn from the shore, despairing we look back,  
And, hurried on, are whelm'd, ingulph'd, and—lost.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT

## A C T V.

SCENE, *The Lists.*

*On one side are ranged the King and Court; on the other, a Multitude, with Officers. Westmoreland and Edward appear, in Armour, attended by 'Squires, each under a Banner, on which are emblazoned their Arms, with Devices; their Lances and Helmets borne.*

*A Herald advances.*

## HERALD.

GUTHBERT, Earl of Westmoreland!  
And noble Edward of Somerset!  
The King commands that ye do now advance,  
And, in the presence, openly declare  
The cause for which a combat ye have ask'd—  
—Risking, in private feuds, the precious blood  
Which for your Country only should be spilt.

## WESTMORELAND.

My Liege! I answer the demand. Lord Edward  
Did yesterday, with humble suit, entreat  
That in his favour I would move my Daughter—  
—Feigning true passion, and unequall'd love.  
With warm regard I did accept the charge,  
And—not without some difficulty—won her.  
'This morn was fix'd, by hymeneal rites  
To sanctify the passion they avow'd.

*This*

This very morn, whilst I, with joy impatient,  
 Prepar'd to hail him Son——  
 He came, with slander charg'd—breathing base falsehoods  
 To stain her name, and gloss the violation  
 Of his pledg'd faith—Therefore I challenge Edward!

K I N G.

This charge, by Westmoreland's good Earl alledg'd,  
 We have, with wonder and concern, attended.  
 'Mongst the bright Ladies who adorn our court,  
 Not one so peerless stands as Countess Raimond;  
 Not one whose fame more fitly suits her birth;  
 Nor one whose honour more becomes her fame.  
 Why then, Lord Edward, hast thou, causeless, stain'd it?  
 Why thrown away a gem that throned monarchs  
 Might have beheld thee wear with envy?

E D W A R D.

Be witness for me, Heaven! You, my dread Sovereign!  
 And ye, assembled People—bear me witness!  
 That Raimond's chastity I held unquestion'd,  
 As the high myst'ries of our holy faith.  
 I lov'd her with most honourable love,  
 And to have worn with her the marriage-chain,  
 More glorious deem'd it, than imperial crowns.  
 I, who would, yesterday, against a legion  
 Her honour have maintain'd, must now—oh horrible!  
 Here, in the blushing face of day, stand forth  
 The forc'd accuser of undone Albina!

K I N G.

Some wrong interpretation seems to lurk,  
 And to have caus'd this mischievous dispute.  
 We do advise ye, Lords, to take more time.  
 If, in short space, the knot doth not unfold,  
 We do consent that ye again shall meet,  
 And prove, at point of sword, whose is the error.

W E S T.

## WESTMORELAND.

This sword, my Liege! hath taught the Eastern  
world

Submission to your laws. Its faithful point  
Hath prob'd the hearts of Infidels and Rebels—  
May its good service to confusion turn,  
And may this arm cling nerveless to my side,  
If I depart the lists, ere I have prov'd it  
On the defamer of my spotless Child!

## K I N G.

In this nice point, we only with advice  
Would interpose, not fetter with commands.  
If this be your matur'd resolve, pursue it;  
'Though deeply we lament, that two such Heroes  
Should 'gainst each other's bosom turn the lance.  
Sound to the combat!

*[Trumpet sounds, Herald advances.]*

## H E R A L D.

Ye Knights! who gave and have accepted challenge,  
—Lords, Westmoreland and Edward, your career  
Begin! not doubting but his arm will vanquish  
Who lifts it on the side of sacred truth.  
God speed the right!

## W E S T M O R E L A N D.

Now, Edward! the grey locks that thou didst taunt  
Shall prove a wreath victorious.

*[Goes eagerly towards his horse.]*

## E D W A R D.

Since thy fierce spirit will with blood alone  
Be satisfied, O Westmoreland! I follow thee.  
But, righteous Heaven! direct my erring arm,  
That, whilst it guards the life thou bidst me keep,  
It may not injure his, who thirsts for mine!

*[Enter*

# A T R A G E D Y.

71

*Enter Egbert, rushing from the crowd.*

E G B E R T.

Hold—oh, hold! stay, my Lords! ere ye commit  
A deed, that leads to horror, and repentance.  
I have a tale that will unfold—

*Gondibert springing forward.*

G O N D I B E R T.

Villain!

Thou ly'st! it choaks thee in the utterance.

K I N G.

Whence this irreverence? Disarm Lord Gondibert!  
And know, bold Man, that in the eye of Kings  
All hold an equal place. I bear a sceptre  
Which is my People's *staff*, and shall support  
Alike, the Peasant and his Lord. Speak, old Man;  
Whate'er thy tale, thou shalt have patient hearing.

E G B E R T.

Most gracious Liege! to save the precious blood  
Of these much-injur'd Lords, with deepest sorrow  
I witness bear, that in a snare they've fall'n,  
Most wickedly devis'd for their destruction.

K I N G.

Whom dost accuse of this atrocious crime?

E G B E R T.

There *are*, my Liege, who have with groundless jealousy  
Poison'd Lord Edward's mind, and work'd on him  
To yield to infamy his spotless Bride.

E D W A R D.

Blest old Man! prove me, oh! that monster prove me!

K I N G.

Thou say'st there *are*, but nam'st not those in fault.

E G B E R T.

Hard task!—in truth, the chief in fault is—

G O N.

## GONDIBERT.

Daftard!

Speak out ; nor dare insult me with thy mercy.  
 'Twas *I*—I am the chief in fault—if fault  
 It be. I practis'd on a Fool's credulity,  
 Shew'd him an Angel in the garb of hell,  
 And he *believ'd* the cheat'ry.

EDWARD,

Oh! thy words

Are barbed arrows. I am sick at heart.

## GONDIBERT.

'Twas me thou sawest in Albina's chamber.  
 The tales, to which thou list'nedst of her falsehood,  
 Were all imposture—and this I did, because  
 I *love* her.

EDWARD.

Love her!

## GONDIBERT.

Aye! and wherefore—

—Say wherefore, but the casual name of Brother,  
 Should not I boast my Love? But for that cause,  
 Thou, Edward, had'st not dar'd to *think* upon her.

WESTMORELAND.

Impious—most impious passion!

## GONDIBERT.

Even now

I will maintain it. Instant will I arm, [*To Edward.*  
 And meet thee in the Lists—and, since the laws  
 Ordain my Love a crime, there thou may'st rip it  
 From my heart. [*Going.*

KING.

Stay, I do command thee, stay!  
 Thou hast no longer title to the rights  
 Allow'd to those, who, in the path of Honour,

Have,

Have, persevering, shap'd their brilliant course:  
 Thy crimes beneath our yeomanry degrade thee;  
 And we decree, that whoso'er accepts  
 From thee a challenge, be unworthy held  
 To try his lance with honourable Knights.

GONDIBERT.

My Liege! [*Resentfully.*]

KING.

Nay, deem not *this* an injury,  
 Nor this thy punishment——  
 When men of such exalted rank as thine,  
 Submit to crimes, to treachery, and baseness,  
 Justice, unshaken, on your heads should pour  
 The vial of her wrath; that ye may stand  
 As dreadful beacons to the world beneath.

Hear then thy doom!—We banish thee our realm.  
 If in twelve hours thou shalt be found within  
 The precincts of our Court, or in three days  
 Within our Kingdom—be it at thy peril!  
 Nor frame an answer—but begone.

[*Exit Gondibert, Egbert following.*  
 Stay, old Man!

Thou, to whose love of sacred truth we owe  
 This happy change, by us shalt be retain'd;  
 Thy King will answer for thy fortunes.

EGBERT.

Oh, gracious Liege! unworthy I should be  
 To tread the earth, could I accept of blessings  
 From such a source as my lov'd Lord's destruction:  
 It is a horrid duty I've fulfill'd!  
 To some forsworn abode I'll now retire,  
 Wasting the cheerless remnant of my days  
 In sorrow for his fault; and weary Heaven  
 With prayers for his repentance.

L

WEST.

## WESTMORELAND.

Thy retirement  
Is my care. Go, good Egbert, to my palace,  
And wait my coming. [Exit Egbert.]

EDWARD.

Injured Westmoreland!  
How—how shall I approach thee? Shame, despair,  
Do rend my breast; nor dare I lift my eyes  
To thine, lest I should read my sentence there.

KING.

Come, my good Lord! let *me* for Edward plead—  
For him, whose virtues, glory, and descent,  
Demand an advocate not less than royal.  
Surely, if fair Albina now beheld him,  
With eyes in deep contrition bent on earth,  
Pity would rob her anger of its sting—  
She too would plead; and, in the voice of Love,  
Extort a pardon for her *Country's Hero*.

WESTMORELAND.

Though high in spirit, proud, and quickly mov'd  
With aught that glances on my precious honour—  
Yet, gracious Sovereign! I can *pardon* too.  
These public proofs of my Albina's virtue,  
Restore my bosom to its wonted calm,  
And thee, Lord Edward, to thy wonted place.  
—Again I thus embrace thee as my Son. [Shouts.]

EDWARD.

O great, transporting, unexampled goodness!

KING.

This then is still the wedding-day—the rites  
Be instantly perform'd. That no regret  
May poison such an hour, we do recall  
The order of your service in the East,  
'Till we ourself shall in the Orient Sea

Lave our proud oars ; and with Britannia's sword,  
Blazing destruction, like the guardian Seraph's,  
Drive from blest Zion's walls the humbled Infidel.

EDWARD.

My Prince, my Guardian, and my royal Master !  
With rapture I accept the leave you grant,  
And give my helmet, to the God of Love.  
[Westmoreland and Edward kneel at the foot of the  
throne, and the Scene closes.]

SCENE, *An Apartment in Gondibert's Palace.*

*Enter Gondibert, followed by Editha.*

EDITHA.

'Tis thus that men, when sinking, from the ruin  
Which their own folly bred, accuse the heavens,  
And execrate their stars. Curse not thy fate,  
Nor Egbert ; 'tis thyself on whom thou shouldst  
Revenge thine injuries.

GONDIBERT.

Editha, spare me !

My mind, with wild contending passions torn,  
Now, like a hart by worrying dogs forfok,  
Sinks into apathy.

EDITHA.

Hear then a tale,

Will rouse thee from thy lethargy—this night  
Albina will be Edward's Wife.

GONDIBERT.

This night ?

EDITHA.

This hour !

GONDIBERT.

It is enough. My wrongs awake  
In all their strength, and cry aloud for vengeance.  
'There is an insult in this over-haste,

That

That finishes the whole. [*Pausing.*] Editha, leave me.  
On dreadful things I now would ruminate!

EDITHA,

On what? Impart to me thy thoughts—Instruct me.

GONDIBERT.

No. Leave me.

EDITHA.

Ha! I see his mind is full  
Of some important deed. His low'ring brow,  
And that fix'd eye, bespeak some latent mischief.  
Mischiefs, awake! to ye alone my soul  
Bears unison. I'll urge him to the quick.

Conceive the transports of victorious Edward!  
Conceive his triumph—triumph over thee!  
That, e'en in Raimond's arms, points every bliss—  
Makes rapture sweeter—

GONDIBERT.

Fiend! hast thou no mercy?  
Dost riot in my woes? Are these the gifts  
Of friendship?

EDITHA.

No—the gifts of wild despair.  
Oh, wert thou such a dotard to believe  
That *pity*—pity to *thy* woes, e'er prompted me  
To steep my soul in crimes?

GONDIBERT.

What is't I hear?

EDITHA.

That I aspir'd to greatness, and perceiv'd  
No road to reach my hopes, but through Lord Edward;  
That to behold another in his arms,  
Is madness; and that *thee* I made my tool  
To interrupt their hated loves.

GONDIBERT.

Perdition!

Fly me, thou Monster! lest thy womanhood

I should

I should forget, and scatter thee in atoms  
To the tempestuous winds !——

[*Exit Editha, with an air of menace.*

[*Musing.*]

Be firm, my soul ! nor let unworthy weakness  
Destroy the vengeful purpose thou hast fram'd.  
Banish'd—robb'd of my country, and my name ;  
Yet they have left a mind defies their vengeance—  
Which, though these limbs were lock'd in bolts of steel,  
And darkness wrapt these precious founts of light,  
Would rise superior to their *bounded* power,  
And scorn alike their fetters, and their laws.  
He for whom I'm exil'd, for exil'd Gondibert  
Shall weep with his heart's blood ; and ev'ry vein  
Pour tribute to my mighty sorrows. Edward !  
This night, in which thy pulse beats high to transport,  
Thy senses giddy with approaching bliss—  
—This night beholds thee in Death's icy bands ;  
Thy shroud shall fold thee, not Albina's arms !

[*Exit.*

S C E N E *changes to Albina's Garden.*

*Enter Adela.*

A D E L A.

Alas ! my Mistress ! vainly have I sought her  
Through ev'ry gloomy, solitary walk,  
To give the tidings that will kill her peace.  
Ah ! she is here. How mournful is her air !

*Enter Editha.*

The ceremonial's past—unhappy Lady !  
Lord Edward and the Countess now are one.

E D I T H A.

'Tis well ! I hear thee, Adela, unmov'd !  
Can one grow callous from repeated woes ?  
Shall the scourg'd wretch not feel the *added* stripe ?

A D E L A.

With decent pride, and with affected anger,  
The Countess long her Lover's prayers withstood.

At

At length, the King—to save her from the shame  
Of yielding to her heart's most eager wish—  
Commanded she should take Lord Edward's hand,  
And he himself would join them at the altar.

EDITHA.

Dæmons preside o'er the detested nuptials!

ADELA.

I was preparing to attend you here,  
When the Lord Edward met me. Go! said he,  
Seek out your Mistress. Much oppress'd she seems,  
And overcome with care. Bear her these lines—  
—Her anguish they'll relieve.

EDITHA.

To me, a letter!

*Reads.*

“ The injuries the Countess hath received, cannot  
“ be pardon'd, yet I'll not expose you. Leave  
“ Albina's castle, yet leave it as your voluntary  
“ act. The ills his family hath brought on  
“ you, Edward will not increase, but study to  
“ relieve. A stipend, suited to your rank, shall  
“ be assign'd you; but you must live at distance  
“ from Albina.

Insolent! [*flinging away the letter.*]

Shall Edward, then, prescribe my breathing-place?  
Shall he point out the spot, where I must eat  
The morsel he assigns me? Sibald! Sibald!  
Will it not rack thee, even in thy tomb,  
That thy Editha must depend for bread  
On his curst Son, who brought thee to the block?

ADELA.

Be not thus mov'd, but rather, Madam, think——

EDITHA.

I think on nothing but my wrongs.

ADELA.

The Countess

Commanded me to seek her Friend, and chide  
An absence—so unkind!

EDITHA:

## 79

Must I return,

[*Exeunt.*

GONDIBERT.

[Throwing himself on the Earth.

Hah—'tis too late; Repentance comes too late!

[Starting up.

He falls, he gasps—in agonies he writhes!

That

That groan!—death's in that groan—Oh, it has pierc'd  
My brain—my brain's on fire! the tempest rages—  
Come on, ye Furies! I can match ye here—  
Here are such tortures as ye never gave.

[*Much agitated, and starting with a distracted air.*]

O blasting fight! 'tis Raimond—'tis Albina!  
Grasp'd by a blooming Youth—another Lover!  
She pulls him to her heart—Nay, then for this—  
Vainly thou fleest—I'll stab thee in his arms.  
Hah! 'twas an empty shade—A shade?—a vision.  
Though Edward bleeds, will not a thousand rivals  
Spring, like the hydra, from his grave, and *one*  
At length be blest? O glorious thought! I'll die—  
I'll die—and bear Albina with me to the grave!

[*Runs wildly off.*]

SCENE *changes to Albina's Anti-chamber.*

*Enter Albina with Attendants.*

I N A.

Permit us, Madam, to perform our duty.  
Unusual weight hath sudden seiz'd my spirits,  
And something here forbids me to obey you.

A L B I N A.

Such pensiveness oft follows, when the mind,  
Surcharg'd with joy, hath yielded all her pow'rs  
To the insidious guest. But leave me, Ina;  
My nightly duty is not yet perform'd.  
Mean time, Editha send; some secret grief  
Preys on her mind, and fain I would relieve  
Her bosom'd anguish.

[*Exeunt Attendants, leaving two Candles on a distant Table.*]

Now, whilst giddy mirth  
Shakes the high dome, and festive merriment  
Expands the heart—let me awhile retire,  
And offer up my grateful thoughts to Him,

Who

Who hath through snares and wond'rous perils led me  
—Led me, secure, to happiness and love.

[*Exit, taking one of the Candles.*

*After a pause, enter Gondibert.*

GONDIBERT.

Mad Riot spreads her banners o'er the house,  
Whilst, unperceiv'd, Death, to the Bridal Room  
Hath work'd his way. His way—alas! for whom?  
Wilt thou not shrink? [*Looking on his Dagger.*

Wilt thou not turn and sting me,  
Rather than touch her living alabaster?

The Bed!—The Marriage-Bed!—Arise, ye Furies!  
Light your infernal fires within my breast!  
Drain from my veins each drop of human blood,  
Lest it return, unbidden, to my heart,  
And check my arm i'th'act of holy vengeance!  
O Jealousy! more fell than the mad tigress  
Who roars in anguish for her ravish'd young—  
To what would'st thou transport me?—Ask not—think  
not—

This *moment* gives Albina's wondrous beauties,  
Her heav'n of charms, to Edward—or to Death!  
To Death—to Death—'Tis fixt. Here will I seek her.  
[*Exit.*

*Enter Editha.*

EDITHA.

Was not the triumph of Albina finish'd  
'Till lost Editha witnesses the scene?  
Still with officious goodness doth she haunt me—  
Me, who ne'er sought, but hate compassion. Pity!  
Why do men call thee gentle? Thou'rt an asp  
Within a rose—thy breath is perfume, and thy words  
Sweet blossoms, that contain a venom'd sting—  
Kindlier is Hatred in her honest garb,  
Than *stinging* Pity in her meek-ey'd mask.

M

How

How gay, how full of bliss, is all around me!  
 But, oh! within is an abyss of wretchedness,  
 Which the bright beams of Joy can never reach—  
 And this, O Raimond! do I owe to thee!  
 Ha! had my wishes but the force of spells,  
 That Bridal couch should be a bed of thorns—  
 Thy dreams be cloth'd with images of horror—  
 —With images so strong, they'd seize thy brain,  
 Drag Reason from her throne, and bind her slave  
 To furious phantasies—then would'st thou wake  
 Unconscious of thy bliss, and execrate,  
 Like me, the happiness thou could'st not taste.  
 She comes! to meet my curses in the teeth—  
 Ha! no, 'tis Edward. [Going.]

*Enter Edward.*

EDWARD.

Thou wilt not fly me!  
 Turn, my heart's treasure!—to thy *Husband* turn!

EDITHA.

Torture! I am not she! [Aside.]

EDWARD.

What says my charmer?  
 Why dost thou cruelly avert the eyes  
 Whose glance is transport to thy Edward's heart!  
 Come, my Albina! come; too long thou'st kept me  
 From the blest circle of thy arms.

GONDIBERT. *[Rushing in.]*

Stay longer!

*[Plunges his Dagger into Editha,  
 who screams and sinks.]*

Stay my leave!—'Tis Gondibert who *wills* thy fate.  
 He whom thou'st scorn'd—in love and glory *vanquish'd*,  
 —Confess him, now, thy conqu'ror! See at his feet  
 Thy vaunted bliss! But where's the tow'ring joy  
 That, yesterday, did madden in thy veins,  
 And bore thy haughty soul beyond humanity?

*[Edward stands in an attitude of horror and amazement;  
 then drawing his Dagger, rushes on Gondibert.]*

EDWARD.

This for Albina!

GONDIBERT.

Fool! the stroke of death

Is mine.

[*Arrests Edward's arm, whose breast is exposed to his dagger.**This for Albina—this!*[*Stabs himself, and falls.*] Now, Edward,  
She is my Bride!

EDWARD.

Villain! devil! I cannot stay to curse thee.  
Albina! my sweet Bride! my murder'd Wife!  
The tomb must now be our cold nuptial bed.[*Kneeling by the body.*]

A moment stay—I follow thee—I come!

[*As Edward lifts his arm to stab himself, Albina enters on the opposite side.*

ALBINA.

What mean these dreadful sounds? Oh, sight of  
horror!'Tis death!—a sea of blood!—O Edward! come,  
And catch me ere I fall.

EDWARD.

She lives! she lives!

[*Throwing away the Dagger, clasps her in his arms.*GONDIBERT. [*feebly.*Albina living! Whom, then, have I slain?  
Oh, Heav'n! thy hand was here.WESTMORELAND. [*without.*

This way, this way

Lead to my Daughter's chamber—there's the noise.

[*Enter, preceded by lights, follow'd by Guests.*]

Oh, dismal sight!—

GONDIBERT.

A moment still is spared me to unfold.  
The madness of despairing Love, impell'd me

To kill Albina—But in her stead—oh !—  
 —My life doth flow too fast !—Pity—forgive me !  
 My guilty passion, even, now expires—  
 It rushes from my heart, in crimson streams,  
 And mingles with the dust. My crimes alone  
 Remain—they'll not forsake—they'll never quit me.  
 And now I'm summon'd—where— [Dies.]

## A L B I N A.

May mercy meet thee !  
 My Brother ! I forgive, and mourn thy errors,  
 As I adore His hand, who hath preserv'd me.

## E D W A R D.

Accept, high Heav'n ! my penetrated heart.  
 This day, in each revolving year, I'll celebrate.  
 The Debtor shall behold his bonds fall off,  
 The Poor rejoice, the Orphan's tears be dried—  
 —Nor sighs, nor tones of woe, profane the day—  
 The hallow'd day ! on which thou sav'dst Albina.

WESTMORELAND. [*Speaking to the Guests.*]

Oh, mark th' effects of passions unrestrain'd !  
 Within the bosom of this noble Youth  
 Bright virtues sprung, as in their native bed ;  
 'Till Vice—alluring in the shape of Love—  
 Crept silent to his heart—there spread her poisons—  
 There her black empire fix'd ; then dragg'd her slave,  
 Through infamy, to death.

4 AP 54

T H E E N D.

